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**The End of the Scottish Enlightenment in its Transatlantic  
Context: Moral education in the thought of Dugald Stewart  
and Samuel Stanhope Smith, 1790-1812**

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## Abstract

The thesis explores the history of the Scottish Enlightenment in its transatlantic context and, in particular, the diffusion of Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Scotland and the United States. This project is the first full-scale attempt to examine the tensions between late eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment intellectual culture and counter-Enlightenment interests in the Atlantic World. My comparative study focuses on two of the most influential university educators in Scotland and the newly-founded United States. These are Dugald Stewart at the University of Edinburgh and Samuel Stanhope Smith at the College of New Jersey (which later became Princeton University). Stewart and Smith are ideal for a transatlantic comparative project of this kind, because of their close parallels as moral philosophy professors at the University of Edinburgh (1785-1810) and the College of New Jersey (1779-1812) respectively; their conflicts with ecclesiastical factions and counter-Enlightenment policies in the first decade of the nineteenth century; and finally their uses and adaptations of Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy. The broader question I address is how the diffusion and fate of Scottish Enlightenment moral thought was affected by the different institutional and, above all, religious contexts in which it was taught.

Dugald Stewart's and Stanhope Smith's interpretations of central philosophical themes reflected their desire to improve the state of society by educating enlightened and virtuous young men who would later enter careers in public life. In doing so, their teaching of natural religion and metaphysics brought them into conflict with religious factions, namely American religious revivalists on Princeton's Board of Trustees and members of the Scottish ecclesiastical Moderate party, who believed that revealed religion should provide the foundation of education. The controversies that emerged from these tensions did not develop in an intellectual vacuum. My research illustrates how the American and Scottish reception of the French Revolution; the 1793-1802 Scottish Sedition Trials; Scottish and American 'polite' culture; Scottish secular and ecclesiastical politics; American Federalist and Republican political debates; American student riots between 1800 and 1807; and American religious revivalism affected Smith's and Stewart's programmes of moral education. While I identify this project as an example of cultural and intellectual history, it also advances interests in the history of education, ecclesiastical history, transnational history, and comparative history.

The thesis has two main parts. The first consists of three chapters on Dugald Stewart's system of moral education: the circumstances in which Stewart developed his moral education as a modern version of Thomas Reid's so-called Common Sense philosophy, Stewart's applied ethics, and finally, his defence of the Scottish Enlightenment in the context of the 1805 John Leslie case. Complementing the chronology and themes in part one, the second part consists of three chapters on Smith's programme of moral education: the circumstances that gave rise to Smith's creation of the Princeton Enlightenment, Smith's applied ethics, and finally, Smith's defence of his system of moral education in the contexts of what he saw as two converging counter-Enlightenment factions (religious revivalists and rebellious students) at Princeton. In examining these areas, I argue that Dugald Stewart and Samuel Stanhope Smith attempted to systematically sustain Scottish Enlightenment ideas (namely Scottish philosophy) and values ('Moderatism') against counter-Enlightenment movements in higher education.

## Declarations

I, Charles Bradford Bow, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 88,681 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree. The ideas developed in part two of this thesis has appeared, with my supervisors' approval, in my article, 'Samuel Stanhope Smith and Common Sense Philosophy at Princeton', *Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, 8:2, (September 2010): 189-209.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Charles Bradford Bow

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Above all, I am and forever will be grateful for my family's encouragement and patience with my academic endeavors. If not for the selfless support of my wife Nicole and daughters Ashton and Harper, this work would not have been possible.

## Abbreviations

AUP	Aberdeen University Press
CCSE	Alexander Broadie (ed.), <i>The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment</i> , (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
Cockburn, <i>Memorials</i>	Henry Cockburn, <i>Memorials of His Time</i> , two volumes, (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1856).
CU	Richard Sher, <i>Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh</i> , (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985).
CUP	Cambridge University Press
EUL	Edinburgh University Library
EUP	Edinburgh University Press
FM	'Resolves and Minutes of Faculty', Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University (cited by date)
Green, Diary	'Ashbel Green's diaries'. Princeton University Library Ashbel Green Collection C0257, two volumes, (June 1790- 21 February 1800, in Box 1, Folder 1; February 1800-6 April 1822, in Box 2, Folder 1) (cited by date)
HUP	Harvard University Press
Maclean, <i>HCNJ</i>	John Maclean Jr., <i>History of the College of New Jersey, from Its Origin in 1746 to the Commencement of 1854</i> , two volumes, (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1877).
Noll, <i>Princeton</i>	Mark Noll, <i>Princeton and the Republic, 1768-1822: The Search for a Christian Enlightenment in the Era of Samuel Stanhope Smith</i> , (Vancouver, B.C.: Regent College Publishing, 1989).
OUP	Oxford University Press
PUA	Princeton University Archives, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University
PUL	Manuscript Division, Firestone Library, Princeton University
PULC	<i>Princeton University Library Chronicle</i>
PUP	Princeton University Press
SHR	<i>The Scottish Historical Review</i>



- Smith, *Lectures* Samuel Stanhope Smith, *The Lectures, Corrected and Improved, which have been delivered for a series of years, in the College of New Jersey; on the subjects of Moral and Political Philosophy*, two volumes, (Trenton: James Wilson, 1812).
- Stewart, *Elements* Dugald Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1792).
- Stewart, *Outlines* Dugald Stewart, *Outlines of Moral Philosophy, for the use of students in the University of Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1793).
- TM Trustee Minutes of Princeton University, (volume one, 1748-1796; volume two, 1797-1823), Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University (cited by date and page number)
- WMQ *The William and Mary Quarterly*

## Introduction

### **Defining the Scottish Enlightenment in the Atlantic World: methodology, historiography, and Thomas Reid's Common Sense philosophy**

Reflecting on an accomplished life spent in the forefront of American politics, education, and medicine, Benjamin Rush remarked that ‘the two years I spent in Edinburgh, I consider as the most important in their influence upon my character and conduct of any period in my life [and] perhaps there is at present no spot upon the earth where religion, science, and literature combine more to produce moral and intellectual pleasures than in the metropolis of Scotland’.<sup>1</sup> Rush’s enthusiasm for Edinburgh and the Scottish recipe for fostering Enlightenment was not uncommon. Eighteenth-century men of letters, including a reluctant Voltaire, largely shared Rush’s esteem for Edinburgh’s culture of ‘polite’ taste and high intellectual standards.<sup>2</sup> At the height of the late eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment, the so-called Moderate literati developed innovative notions of human nature, ethics, and political economy from the ethos of improving the human condition in society.<sup>3</sup> The concepts of this enlightened generation,

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Rush to James Rush 1809, quoted in David Freeman Hawke, *Benjamin Rush: Revolutionary Gadfly*, (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), 63.

<sup>2</sup> See John Dwyer, ‘The imperative of sociability: Moral culture in the later Scottish Enlightenment’, *British Journal of Eighteenth-Century Science*, 13:2, (1990): 169-184; Lorraine Daston, ‘The ideal and reality of the Republic of Letters in the Enlightenment’, *Science in Context*, 4:2, (1991): 367-386; Michel Malherbe, ‘The Impact on Europe’, in *CCSE*, 298-315.

<sup>3</sup> William Robert Scott coined the term Scottish Enlightenment to describe eighteenth-century Scotland’s age of improvement (William Robert Scott, *Francis Hutcheson: His Life, Teaching and Position in the history of Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900), 265). Richard Sher’s seminal work on the Church of Scotland and Edinburgh University shows that several members of the ecclesiastical Moderate party and Edinburgh University, particularly William Robertson, Hugh Blair, Alexander Carlyle, John Home, and Adam Ferguson, developed the ideology of ‘Moderatism’ that harmonised Calvinist principles with ‘polite’ society and the pursuit of philosophical truths (Sher, *CU*). Hugh Trevor-Roper suggests that the shared interest amongst Scottish philosophers in improving humankind’s social and moral conduct marked a leading characteristic of the Scottish Enlightenment (Hugh Trevor-Roper, ‘The Scottish Enlightenment’, *Blackwood’s Magazine*, 322, (1977), 371-88). For further information on the emergence of the Scottish Enlightenment see Jane Rendall, *The Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment*, (London: Macmillan, 1978); R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner (eds.), *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1982); Alexander Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment: The historical age of the historical nation*,

which included prominent figures such as Adam Smith, William Robertson, David Hume, Thomas Reid, and Adam Ferguson, were not restricted to Edinburgh nor were their ideas confined to Scotland.<sup>4</sup> The transnational dissemination of Scottish philosophical writings, particularly in North America, testified to its wide appeal.<sup>5</sup> Of the distinctive ideas associated with the Scottish Enlightenment, Alexander Broadie suggests that the so-called Scottish School of Common Sense dominated late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Scottish moral philosophy and was ‘among Scotland’s most successful invisible exports’ of the time.<sup>6</sup> From its distinct Scottish origin and some disagreement over the term ‘common sense’, Common Sense philosophy gradually became known in the Republic of Letters as ‘Scottish philosophy’.<sup>7</sup> The enthusiasm for Scottish philosophy did not imply that other philosophical systems were not practised at this time in Scotland. For instance, the Moderate literati of Edinburgh such as Adam Ferguson drew heavily from a version of Stoicism whilst David Hume was known for his mitigated scepticism.<sup>8</sup> Despite this diversity in thought, Scottish philosophy was central to late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Scottish moral philosophy and, from its

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(Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001); Nicholas Phillipson, ‘The Scottish Enlightenment and the science of man’, *Theoretische Gechiedenis*, 8, (1981): 3-19; Idem, ‘Towards a definition of the Scottish Enlightenment’, in *City & Society in the 18th century*, edited by Fritz and Williams, (Toronto: Hakkert, 1973), 125-147.

<sup>4</sup> Distinct versions of Enlightenment thought and values emerged at this time in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Glasgow. Despite measurable differences, the Scottish literati of these cities were closely linked in an overarching national pursuit for improvement and use of philosophy from offices in universities and the Church. For further reading on the eighteenth-century Enlightenment in Glasgow and Aberdeen see Jennifer Carter and Joan Pittock (eds.), *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment*, (AUP, 1992); Paul Wood, *The Aberdeen Enlightenment*, (AUP, 1993); Andrew Hook and Richard Sher (eds.), *The Glasgow Enlightenment*, (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> See Henry May, *The Enlightenment in America*, (OUP, 1976), 88-105; Michel Malherbe, ‘The Impact on Europe’, in *CCSE*, 298-315; Samuel Fleischacker, ‘The impact on America: Scottish philosophy and the American founding’, in *CCSE*, 316-337.

<sup>6</sup> See Alexander Broadie, *A History of Scottish Philosophy*, (EUP, 2009), 3.

<sup>7</sup> See Selwyn Grave, *The Philosophy of Common Sense*, (OUP, 1960), 1-10.

<sup>8</sup> While Hume counted prominent Moderates including Robertson, Blair, and Ferguson as friends, I am not suggesting he was a Moderate since this group consisted of Presbyterian ministers and their religious convictions largely characterised the Moderates of Edinburgh.

dominance, this philosophical system played a part in developing transnational notions of ethics and modernity.<sup>9</sup>

During this period and beyond, Scottish philosophy occupied a central place in university curricula on either side of the Atlantic.<sup>10</sup> Its popularity in higher education largely stemmed from its compatibility with revealed religion whilst addressing complex metaphysical questions. Richard Sher and Lawrence Williams have shown that Scottish professors of moral philosophy were often ordained Presbyterian ministers, however, they rarely held both ecclesiastical and professorial offices at the same time.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the Scottish tradition of using professorial chairs to test and perfect philosophical theories in a pedagogical context assisted in its wider application. As Gordon Graham has shown, ‘the ambition of Scottish philosophy is to be found in its continuous attempt to combine the educational and investigative roles of philosophy within a single method or discipline’.<sup>12</sup> This Scottish tradition in moral philosophy facilitated a clear model for moral education. But interpretations of Scottish philosophy were not uniformly followed across universities in the Atlantic World. The particular interests of moral philosophers, different circumstances, and distinct national cultures encouraged different adaptations of central philosophical themes in preparing young men for public life. The variations between these interpretations of Scottish philosophy reveal

<sup>9</sup> See George Davie, *The Social Significance of the Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense*, The Dow Lecture, (Dundee: University of Dundee, 1973).

<sup>10</sup> The noteworthy efforts by Pierre Paul Royer-Collard and his disciples Victor Cousin and Théodore Jouffroy influenced the nineteenth-century French adoption of Thomas Reid’s Common Sense philosophy. See Edward Madden, ‘Victor Cousin and the Commonsense Tradition’, *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 1:1, (1984): 93-109.

<sup>11</sup> See Richard Sher, ‘Professors of virtue: The social history of the Edinburgh moral philosophy chair in the eighteenth century’, in *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, edited by M.A. Stewart, (OUP, 1990), 87-126; Lawrence Williams, ‘Pulpit and Gown’—Edinburgh University and the Church, 1760-1830’, in *Scottish Universities: Distinctiveness and diversity*, edited by Carter and Withrington, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1992), 87-95.

<sup>12</sup> Gordon Graham, ‘The Ambition of Scottish philosophy’, *The Monist*, 90:2, (2007): 154.

telling information about the circumstances in which it was taught and how prominent Scottish Enlightenment ideas and values were transmitted in the Atlantic World.

In the late eighteenth century, the College of New Jersey (which later became Princeton) and Edinburgh University were famous for diffusing the ideas and spirit of the Scottish Enlightenment.<sup>13</sup> James McCosh, who was in a position to reflect on both Princeton and Edinburgh, later remarked that ‘the chairs of mental science in the Scottish colleges have had more influence than any others in germinating thought in the minds of Scottish youth, and in giving a permanent bias and direction to their intellectual growth’.<sup>14</sup> By extension, the particular values and ideas taught in the moral philosophy course informed the expected ideals that a graduate of Princeton or Edinburgh should possess. While John Witherspoon’s administration and Adam Ferguson’s ‘Moderate’ contemporaries continue to attract considerable interest, their respective successors in moral philosophy have until recently received relatively little attention.<sup>15</sup> Despite teaching during the supposed decline of the Scottish Enlightenment, Dugald Stewart at Edinburgh University and Samuel Stanhope Smith at the College of New Jersey were considered the most influential educators of their time. Although they are often

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<sup>13</sup> The College of New Jersey was originally located in Elizabeth, New Jersey for its first year in 1746 and then relocated to Newark, New Jersey for nine years. After Nathaniel FitzRandolph donated land in Princeton, New Jersey and upon that land grant the College built Nassau Hall in 1756, the College officially found a home where it remains today. From 1756 onwards, people also referred to the College of New Jersey as Princeton or Nassau. Considering the College’s diverse degree and course offerings instituted during James McCosh’s administration from 1868 through 1888, the Board of Trustees renamed the College after its location, Princeton University, in 1896. For further reading on Princeton’s transformation see Thomas Jefferson Wertebaker, *Princeton, 1746-1896*, (PUP, 1974).

<sup>14</sup> James McCosh, *The Scottish Philosophy: Biographical, Expository, Critical, from Hutcheson to Hamilton*, (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1875), 8.

<sup>15</sup> A special issue on Dugald Stewart edited by Knud Haakonssen and Paul Wood will appear in a forthcoming issue of *History of European Ideas* in March 2012. In this collection, Jane Rendall’s ‘Adaptations: History, Gender and Political Economy in the Work of Dugald Stewart’ offers excellent coverage of Stewart’s moral philosophy and his reception by women writers. Some recent examples of works devoted to Witherspoon in a transatlantic context are: Gideon Mailer, ‘Anglo-Scottish union and John Witherspoon’s American Revolution’, *The William & Mary Quarterly*, 67:4, (October 2010): 709-746; Daniel Howe, ‘John Witherspoon and the Transatlantic Enlightenment’, in *Atlantic Enlightenment*, edited by Susan Manning and Francis Cogliano, (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), 61-80.

understood in relation to their predecessors and teachers (Reid and Witherspoon), Smith and Stewart conceived exceptional programmes of moral education. In the decades that followed the French Revolution, Smith and Stewart combated modern philosophical scepticism and the supposed decay of morals and high intellectual standards from the classroom. In doing so, their respective programmes modernised earlier ideas of cultivating the mind and morals for a new generation of public figures in the Atlantic World.

This doctoral thesis therefore will compare Stewart's and Smith's programmes of moral education in their transatlantic context. Stewart and Smith are ideal for a project of this kind, because of their close parallels as moral philosophy professors at the University of Edinburgh (1785-1810) and the College of New Jersey (1779-1812) respectively; their conflicts with ecclesiastical factions and counter-Enlightenment policies in the first decade of the nineteenth century; and finally their uses and adaptations of Scottish philosophy. The broader question I address is how the diffusion and fate of Scottish Enlightenment moral thought was affected by the different institutional and, above all, religious contexts in which it was taught.

Stewart and Smith flourished in an age when factions within the Scottish and American Presbyterian Church advanced counter-Enlightenment policies to censor the teaching of metaphysics and eliminate secularism in the faculty of arts.<sup>16</sup> Isaiah Berlin has been credited with first considering the existence of late eighteenth-century counter-Enlightenment movements.<sup>17</sup> Berlin's example of exploring the counter-Enlightenment in

<sup>16</sup> See Emma Vincent Macleod, 'The responses of Scottish churchmen to the French Revolution, 1789-1802', *SHR*, 73:196, part 2, (Oct., 1994): 191-215; Mark Noll, 'The Princeton Trustees of 1807: New Men and New Directions', *PULC*, 41, (1980): 208-230.

<sup>17</sup> See Isaiah Berlin, 'The Counter-Enlightenment', *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, vol. 2, (1973), 100-112. Berlin's seminal essay was reprinted in his widely published edited volume, *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, (London, 1979; New York, 1980; OUP, 1981; New York, 1982; London, 1997; PUP, 2001).

eighteenth-century Germany led others to question if similar movements targeted other types of Enlightenment. Darrin McMahon and Graeme Garrard extended the scope of Berlin's notion of counter-Enlightenment to include revolutionary France and the possibility of its existence in other transnational contexts.<sup>18</sup> This thesis defines the counter-Enlightenment as reflecting inverse views of a particular version of Enlightenment thought and ideology. An intolerance to free public expression and opposition to ideas that questioned the policies of established institutions (namely the government and the church) were widely shared threads across transnational counter-Enlightenments. This does not imply that proponents of counter-Enlightenment policies opposed all the aspects of Enlightenment thought or values. Just as there were various, distinct types of Enlightenment (often categorised by its national origin), different kinds of counter-Enlightenment also emerged. Despite the Scottish Enlightenment's support of Calvinist principles and its prominent figures' association with the Church of Scotland and American Presbyterianism, conservative clergymen on either side of the Atlantic embraced counter-Enlightenment policies toward this type of Enlightenment.

These counter-Enlightenment campaigns were strengthened through partnerships with political parties. While American and Scottish secular and ecclesiastical politics involved largely different objectives, they were host to Presbyterian clergymen with similar counter-Enlightenment sentiments. Both agreed on the need to safeguard morality and Christian principles from political radicalism and atheism associated with the French

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<sup>18</sup> See Darrin McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity*, (OUP, 2002); Graeme Garrard, *Counter-Enlightenments: From the eighteenth century to the present*, (New York and London: Routledge, 2006). For a thorough discussion of the long eighteenth-century Enlightenment and its counter-Enlightenment see Jonathan Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights, 1750-1790*, (OUP, 2011); Idem, *Enlightenment Contested: philosophy, modernity and the emancipation of man, 1670-1752*, (OUP, 2006); Idem, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the making of modernity, 1650-1750*, (OUP, 2002).



Revolution.<sup>19</sup> These counter-Enlightenment movements in Scotland and America feared impressionable young men were particularly vulnerable to disruptive and atheistic beliefs. They advocated that the teaching of Christian principles to young men would protect the social and religious welfare of society. Consequently, these counter-Enlightenment factions were alarmed by Stewart's and Smith's use of metaphysics, teaching of natural religion, and pedagogical diffusion of 'Moderate' beliefs. Richard Sher argues that Scottish 'Moderatism' was 'dedicated to propagating many of the leading values of the Enlightenment, especially religious tolerance and freedom of expression, reasonableness and moderation, polite learning and literature, humanitarianism and cosmopolitanism, virtue and happiness'.<sup>20</sup> In light of Sher's definition of 'Moderatism', Stewart's and Smith's programmes of moral education harmonised these 'Moderate' values with Thomas Reid's philosophical system. The circumstances that gave rise to 'Moderate' values at Edinburgh and Princeton before the French Revolution, however, did not continue in its wake.

Stewart's and Smith's teaching of 'Moderate' values and natural religion as central parts of their respective systems of moral education brought them into conflict with religious factions, namely American religious revivalists on Princeton's Board of Trustees and members of a new generation of the Scottish ecclesiastical Moderate party, who believed that revealed religion should be taught as the foundation for moral conduct. The controversies that emerged from these tensions did not develop in an intellectual

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<sup>19</sup> For further readings that touched upon the role of counter-Enlightenment policies in American and Scottish politics of the time see Richard Matthews (ed.), *Virtue, Corruption, and Self-Interest: Political values in the eighteenth century*, (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 1994); Alison LaCroix, *The Ideological Origins of American Federalism*, (HUP, 2010); T.M. Devine, 'The failure of radical reform in Scotland in the late eighteenth-century', in *Conflict and Stability in Scottish Society 1700-1850*, edited by idem, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1990), 51-64; Gordon Pentland, 'The French Revolution, Scottish Radicalism and "People Who Were Called Jacobins"', in *Reactions to Revolutions: The 1790s and their aftermath*, edited by Ulrich Broich, H.T. Dickinson, Eckhart Hellmuth, and Martin Schmidt, (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007), 85-108.

<sup>20</sup> Sher, *CU*, 328.



vacuum. This study examines how the American and Scottish reception of the French Revolution, the 1793-1794 Scottish Seditious Trials, Scottish and American 'polite' culture, Scottish secular and ecclesiastical politics, American Federalist and Republican political conflict, American student riots, and American religious revivalism affected Smith's and Stewart's programmes of moral education. While Stewart prevailed against the censorship policies—associated with the Henry Dundas interests—and a counter-Enlightenment faction within the new Moderate party, Smith's programme of moral education fell victim to the rallied efforts of American religious revivalists. In their respective struggles with counter-Enlightenment factions, Stewart's ability to galvanize support from former students and Smith's conflicts with unruly students proved deciding factors in determining the fate of their moral programmes at Princeton and Edinburgh. Their experiences provide examples of the tensions between late eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment thought and values and the interests of its counter-Enlightenment in the Atlantic World. Furthermore, Stewart's and Smith's programmes of moral education offer an explanation for the different ways in which Scottish philosophy was transmitted and adapted in its transatlantic context.

The numerous philosophical influences and the diverse themes that Smith and Stewart taught certainly exceed the scope of a single study. Although such projects merit further attention, this study does not attempt a comprehensive analysis of Smith's and Stewart's moral philosophy, trace the full span of their notions of moral education, or write their intellectual biographies. Instead, this comparative study focuses on the reasons why they created systems of moral education, their adaptations of the philosophical theme of the 'moral faculty', and their tensions with counter-Enlightenment factions. While both Smith and Stewart appealed to a wide range of theories that circulated in the transnational Republic of Letters, they both drew heavily from the writings of Thomas

Reid in creating unique systems of moral education and in treating the theme of the ‘moral faculty’ as an innate source of moral conduct. Their ‘Moderate’ convictions and shared belief that other branches of knowledge (such as natural philosophy and literature) cultivated the ‘moral faculty’ also receives attention in this project.<sup>21</sup> Before explaining my methodology, chapter structure, and how this project addresses gaps within several historiographies, the next section will briefly discuss the main characteristics of Scottish philosophy, Reid’s treatment of the ‘moral faculty’, and this principle’s relation to natural religion.

### **Common Sense Philosophy in the Scottish Enlightenment**

Dugald Stewart and Samuel Stanhope Smith’s programmes of moral education cannot be properly understood without reference to the so-called Scottish School of Common Sense philosophy ‘clustered around Thomas Reid’.<sup>22</sup> Stewart remarked that Reid ‘has exemplified, with the happiest success, that method of investigation by which alone any solid progress can be made; directing his inquiries to a subject which forms a necessary groundwork for the labours of his successors’.<sup>23</sup> With equal enthusiasm, Smith wrote that ‘in this field no writer has distinguished himself with greater zeal, ability, and success than Dr Reid of Glasgow, first in his treatise on the *human mind*, and afterwards

<sup>21</sup> My treatment of Scottish ‘Moderatism’ relies heavily on Sher’s broader definition. While I shall show in the following chapters how Smith and Stewart appealed to ‘Moderate’ values in their respective systems of moral education, this project does not centre on the transatlantic transmission or reception of ‘Moderatism’.

<sup>22</sup> Broadie, *A History of Scottish Philosophy*, 236.

<sup>23</sup> Dugald Stewart, ‘Account of the Life and Writings of Thomas Reid, D.D. F.R.S. Edin.’, in Idem, *Biographical Memoirs of Adam Smith, LL.D., of William Robertson, D.D., and of Thomas Reid, D.D.*, (Edinburgh: George Ramsay and Company, 1811), 443. Reid’s prominent representation of Common Sense philosophy did not imply that his contemporaries in the Aberdeen Philosophical Society (also known as the Wise Club) such as George Campbell and later James Beattie did not contribute to the development of Common Sense. But it is safe to credit Reid with diffusing this philosophical system as an alternative to modern philosophical scepticism.

in his essays on the *intellectual*, and the *active powers of man*'.<sup>24</sup> Similar to other intellectual disciples of Reid, Smith's and Stewart's use of Scottish philosophy furnished the 'bones rather than the flesh or muscles' of their moral philosophy.<sup>25</sup> In this regard, the function of Reid's philosophical system provided governing maxims or 'principles of common sense' as starting and referencing points for philosophical inquiries. He believed these principles were universally self-evident in the divinely inspired constitution of human nature. Moreover, Reid and other Common Sense philosophers suggested that sane people were conscious of these principles and the existence of sensed objects as well as personal identity. This approach was grounded in Francis Bacon's Inductive Method as a science of the mind. Through the evidence of introspective reflection, observing human nature, and past displays of human nature in historical record Common Sense philosophers performed empirical experiments in this science. While this system did not dictate a particular philosophical conclusion, Reidian themes had a profound influence on so-called 'common sense' philosophers. Moreover, Smith's and Stewart's respective interpretations of the 'moral faculty' and natural religion is best understood by first reviewing how Reid treated these philosophical themes. An in-depth examination of Reid's Common Sense philosophy would distract from this project's focus on Smith and Stewart, but a brief review of Reid's philosophical system and his thoughts on the 'moral faculty', 'causation', and natural religion will provide clarity for the philosophical themes discussed in the forthcoming chapters.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Samuel Stanhope Smith, *The Lectures, Corrected and Improved, which have been delivered for a series of years, in the College of New Jersey; on the subjects of Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. one, (Trenton: Wilson, 1812), 139.

<sup>25</sup> McCosh, *Scottish Philosophy*, 2.

<sup>26</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of Reid and his philosophy see Terence Cuneo and Rene Van Woudenberg (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Reid*, (CUP, 2004).

As a Presbyterian minister and later as a regent at King's College, Aberdeen from 1751 to 1764, confronted with David Hume's mitigated scepticism, Thomas Reid claimed that Hume's 'reasoning appeared to me to be just: there was therefore a necessity to call in question the principles upon which it was founded, or to admit the conclusion'.<sup>27</sup> From this conviction, he countered Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40) with *An Inquiry into the Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (1764). Dugald Stewart later remarked that Reid's 'leading design was evidently to overthrow the modern system of scepticism; and at every successive step of his progress, new and unexpected lights break in on his fundamental principles'.<sup>28</sup> Reid's efforts in vindicating his philosophical system and ridiculing the foundations of modern philosophical scepticism were not intended to comprehensively treat every philosophical theme. Instead, he sought to establish a new empirical system based on Bacon's Inductive Method for future inquiries in the science of mind. Reid's philosophy offered an innovative approach to epistemology, and in doing so, he was deeply indebted to previous theorists. Of the numerous theories that influenced Reid's philosophy, he drew heavily from the early Enlightenment writings of Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) on innate cognitive ideas, George Turnbull (1698-1748) on providential naturalism in moral philosophy, and Samuel Clarke (1675-1729) on natural religion. Of course, other theorists of this period such as Gershom Carmichael (1672-1729) and Bishop Joseph Butler (1692-1752) also heavily influenced Reid's philosophy, but for the present purpose I shall trace how Reid drew from the writings of Hutcheson, Turnbull, and Clarke in creating Common Sense philosophy.

<sup>27</sup> The regent system involved one professor who taught logic, metaphysics, moral philosophy, and natural philosophy to a group of students over the course of three years. See Alexander Campbell Fraser, *Thomas Reid*, (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1898), 20-26. Thomas Reid, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the principles of Common Sense*, (Edinburgh: Kincaid and Bell, 1764), iv.

<sup>28</sup> Stewart, 'Account of the Life and Writings of Thomas Reid', in, Idem, *Biographical Memoirs*, 452-453.

Paul Wood suggests that in understanding Reid's philosophy 'we must first recognize that Reid was as much a man of science as he was a moralist'.<sup>29</sup> His earlier studies at Marischal College from 1722 to 1726 under the direction of George Turnbull introduced Reid to the concept of approaching moral philosophy as an experimental science. Turnbull remarked:

I was led long ago to apply myself to the study of the human mind in the same way to the study of the human body, or any other part of Natural Philosophy: that is, to try whether due enquiry into moral nature would not soon enable us to account for moral, as the best of Philosophers teaches us to explain natural phenomena.<sup>30</sup>

Like Turnbull, Reid's enthusiasm for Bacon's Inductive Method later played a central part in his Common Sense philosophy to the extent that Reid suggested that 'he who philosophizes by other rules, either concerning the material system, or concerning the mind, mistakes his aim'.<sup>31</sup> By drawing philosophical conclusions on the evidence of introspective reflection and the external observation of human nature, Reid rebutted the reasoning of David Hume, Rene Descartes, Nicholas Malebranche, John Locke, and George Berkeley as prominent theorists in the so-called 'Ideal Theory'. Reid's use of the scientific method, however, did not imply he failed to draw a distinction between moral laws and the laws of nature.<sup>32</sup> According to Robert Callergard, neither 'the activity and passivity of things, nor final or efficient causes, are within the reach of the kind of

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<sup>29</sup> Paul Wood, 'Thomas Reid and the Culture of Science,' found in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Reid*, edited by Terence Cuneo and Rene van Woudenberg, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 71.

<sup>30</sup> George Turnbull, *The Principles of Moral Philosophy: An Enquiry into the Wise and Good Government of the Moral World in Which the Continuance of Good Administration, and of Due Care about Virtue, for ever, is inferred from present Order in all Things, in that Part chiefly where Virtue is concerned*, (London: John Noon, 1740), iii.

<sup>31</sup> Reid, *An Inquiry into the Mind*, 3.

<sup>32</sup> For further reading on Reid's use of the Inductive Method see Peter Anstey, 'Thomas Reid and the justification of induction', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 12:1, (1995): 77-93; Larry Laudan, 'Thomas Reid and the Newtonian turn of British methodological thought', in *The Methodological Heritage of Newton*, edited by Robert Butts and John Davis, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1970), 103-131.

“Newtonian” physics that Reid defends’.<sup>33</sup> Hume also sought to establish ‘an experience based science of human understanding’ through the use of Bacon’s Inductive Method or the so-called ‘experimental method of reasoning’.<sup>34</sup> Contrary to Hume’s mitigated scepticism in the understanding of human nature (best shown in Book One of *Treatise*), Reid recognised that progress in this science required establishing governing maxims and delineating self-evident or ‘common sense’ principles as a foundation for future work. Reid’s notion of self-evident principles also appealed to Turnbull’s moral thought. Turnbull claimed that ‘no being can know itself, project or pursue any scheme, or lay down maxims for its conduct; but so far as its own constitution is certain; and constant; for so far only, are things ascertainable; and therefore so far only, can rules be drawn from them’.<sup>35</sup> Similar to Turnbull, Reid argued that ‘principles of common sense’ supported the existence of a benevolent deity. Thus, Reid’s Common Sense philosophy expanded upon Turnbull’s belief that ‘human nature and the ways of god to man vindicate, by delineating the general laws to which the principal phenomena in the human system are reducible, and shewing [sic] them to be wise and good’.<sup>36</sup> This religious and philosophical conviction was predicated on the belief that God designed the mind with innate faculties and limited powers for its cultivation and exercise toward perfection.

The concept of ‘common sense’ in describing ‘mother wit’ or an intuitive sense did not originate with Reid. Francis Hutcheson’s *System of Moral Philosophy* (1755) had previously popularized this belief in Scottish moral philosophy. Often considered as the father of Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy, Hutcheson focused his moral theory

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<sup>33</sup> Robert Callergard, ‘Reid and the Newtonian Forces of Attraction’, *The Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, 3:2, (2005): 140.

<sup>34</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, edited by David Norton and Mary Norton, (OUP, 2009), 114-115.

<sup>35</sup> Turnbull, *The Principles of Moral Philosophy*, 3.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

on the natural virtues of humankind and the moral-sense cognitivism in evaluating sentiments and ideas.<sup>37</sup> He believed this natural ability of the mind existed without the instruction of secular or divine laws. Hutcheson remarked that ‘to each of our powers we seem to have a corresponding taste or sense, recommending the proper use of it to the agent, and making him relish or value the like exercise of it by another’.<sup>38</sup> The common experience of these cognitive powers in human conduct suggests a moral truth or ‘realism’ to this belief. Reid later expanded upon this philosophical concept of ‘realism’ in *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* (1788). There Reid drew from Hutcheson’s example of the ‘moral sense’ in illustrating the active powers of the so-called ‘moral faculty’. Reid remarked that ‘the testimony of our moral faculty, like that of the external senses, is the testimony of nature, and we have the same reason to rely upon it’.<sup>39</sup> Yet, Reid differed from Hutcheson by suggesting that people did not merely sense moral qualities but formed moral judgments through this sense whilst possessing the active power to fulfill moral obligations to themselves, others, and God. Gershom Carmichael who taught Hutcheson at Glasgow first considered the branches of duty.<sup>40</sup> Reid’s treatment of the ‘moral faculty’ included and expanded upon these duties in teaching practical ethics at Glasgow University. Contrary to orthodox Calvinism, Reid believed that the perfection of the divinely inspired ‘moral faculty’ provided the primary source for moral behavior. The tension that followed between conservative Calvinists and

<sup>37</sup> Knud Haakonssen, *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy from Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment*, (CUP, 1996), 66.

<sup>38</sup> Francis Hutcheson, *A System of Moral Philosophy*, vol. one, (London: Millar, 1755), 59. This work was published posthumously in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and London. Elements of Hutcheson’s moral philosophy resembled his earlier professor, Gershom Carmichael, who he succeeded as professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow University in 1729. In addition, Hutcheson heavily influenced the thought of Adam Smith who later taught moral philosophy at Glasgow from 1752 until Reid’s 1764 election.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, (Edinburgh: John Bell, 1788), 238.

<sup>40</sup> See James Moore and Michael Silverthorne (eds.), *Natural Rights on the Threshold of the Scottish Enlightenment: The Writings of Gershom Carmichael*, (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2002), 46-48.

Common Sense philosophers over the primary source of morality was reinvigorated during the height of Samuel Stanhope Smith's and Dugald Stewart's teaching careers.

In addition to questions regarding the primary source of morality, Reid's fundamental treatment of 'causation' also relied heavily on natural religion and its relation to innate 'active powers of the mind'.<sup>41</sup> Of the various subjects discussed in eighteenth-century Scottish moral philosophy, the controversial debate over liberty and necessity generated the most attention.<sup>42</sup> This debate involved the extent of God's influence in causes and effects and whether agents acted out of necessity or possessed the free will to determine a particular action. Reid argued that 'the name of a cause and of an agent, is properly given to that being only, which, by its active power produces some change in itself, or in some other being'.<sup>43</sup> His conclusion on this subject was influenced by Samuel Clarke's sermons on natural religion.<sup>44</sup> According to R. F. Stalley, 'Reid's endorsement of Clarke's argument shows that, for him too, the idea that we are free agents is bound up with the idea that motives are not causes'.<sup>45</sup> Reid suggested that the concept of necessity reduced all human actions to the exclusive determination of God and, therefore, denied any human independence in choosing to act or refrain from an action. Reid argued that if the system of necessity existed 'there can be no moral

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<sup>41</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of Reid's treatment of causation and freedom see William Rowe, *Thomas Reid on Freedom and Morality*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 49-93.

<sup>42</sup> For further reading on the debate over necessity and liberty in eighteenth-century Britain see James Harris, *Of Liberty and Necessity: The Free Will Debate in Eighteenth-Century British Philosophy*, (OUP, 2008).

<sup>43</sup> Reid, *Active Powers*, 276.

<sup>44</sup> As a Presbyterian minister at New Machar, Reid read Clark's Boyle Lectures to his congregation on several occasions (Paul Wood, 'Thomas Reid and the Tree of the Sciences', *The Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, 2:2, (2004): 128).

<sup>45</sup> R.F. Stalley, 'Reid's Defence of Freedom', in *Thomas Reid: Context, Influence and Significance*, edited by Joseph Houston, (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2004), 44.



government, nor moral obligation [and] there can be no display of moral attributes'.<sup>46</sup> He likened the concept of necessity to a mechanical engine or compass where people had no choice in obeying or transgressing the secular and religious laws of the world.

Reid concluded that it was improbable that God would create humankind without the ability to merit moral rewards and punishments for vicious conduct. For this reason, Reid advocated that God designed the human species with limited active powers to be agents of cause. He wrote that 'it has pleased the Almighty to bestow upon some of his creatures, particularly upon man, some degree of active power, and of reason, to direct him to the right use of his power'.<sup>47</sup> The significant connection between the liberty to act or refrain from an action and the ability to reasonably determine God's moral design of that power, for Reid, represented humankind's 'moral liberty'.<sup>48</sup> Reid argued that humans are 'not merely a tool in the hand of the master, but a servant, in the proper sense, who has a certain trust, and is accountable for the discharge of it'.<sup>49</sup> The provision of limited free will designed 'after the image of God' came with the moral obligation to make virtuous choices with the use of reason.<sup>50</sup> Although 'moral liberty' made benevolent interactions that merited approbation from others possible, Reid believed that God ultimately judged an agent's use of 'moral liberty'. In this respect, he noted that humankind 'must finally render an account of the talent committed to him, to the supreme Governor and righteous Judge'.<sup>51</sup> The notion that God created humankind with the 'moral liberty' to fulfill His benevolent design and judge how an agent responded to immoral

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<sup>46</sup> Reid, *Active Powers*, 309.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

‘passions or appetites’ demonstrated Reid’s marriage of limited free will and religious faith.<sup>52</sup> Reid did not claim to understand the entirety of God’s purpose for creating humankind with limited freedom, but he suggested that the cultivation of these innate powers better served God and benevolent affections between people than the philosophical concept of necessity.<sup>53</sup>

The transatlantic diffusion of Scottish philosophy and its defence of the belief in a supreme deity did not prevent controversy over its use in higher education. This study will demonstrate how two of Reid’s most distinguished intellectual disciples adapted his philosophical system in a pedagogical context whilst defending ‘Moderate’ values. The following chapters illustrates how Smith and Stewart adapted the functions of the ‘moral faculty’ as the primary source of moral behaviour and ‘moral liberty’ as the limited power to cause an intended effect in preparing young men for public life. The fact that Smith and Stewart did so in radically different circumstances reveals a fascinating, yet unexplored, dimension to the Scottish Enlightenment in the Atlantic World.

### **Methodology & Historiography**

The emergence of Atlantic History as a paradigm for historical inquiry has, for over a decade, exemplified an emphatic move towards a transnational perspective. Through this paradigm historians are reevaluating the traditional notions of commercial, cultural, political, and intellectual currents in the Atlantic World.<sup>54</sup> In recent years, the methods and definitions of Atlantic History have generated much scholarly debate. For instance, *The American Historical Review* and the *William and Mary Quarterly* published

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 310-11.

<sup>54</sup> See Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours*, (HUP, 2005), 3-4. Another key work in defining Atlantic history is Jack Greene and Philip Morgan (eds.), *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal*, (OUP, 2009).

special issues devoted to discussing future horizons for Atlantic History.<sup>55</sup> In defining a methodology for Atlantic History, the writings of David Armitage and Alison Games are particularly instructive. According to Armitage, there are three separate approaches to Atlantic history: ‘trans-Atlantic history’ compares a theme or themes on either side of the Atlantic; ‘circum-Atlantic history’ explores maritime activities in the Atlantic; and finally, ‘cis-Atlantic history’ focuses on an isolated area near an Atlantic coastline.<sup>56</sup> The current project is an example of Armitage’s definition of ‘trans-Atlantic history’. Alison Games suggests that Atlantic History provides an excellent model for bridging multidisciplinary interests in understanding the exchange of ideas, commerce, people, and culture.<sup>57</sup> This project’s investigation of the transatlantic practises of Scottish philosophy in a pedagogical context contributes to this new wave of historical inquiry. Does this enthusiasm for transnational history permit space for national perspectives? This comparative study suggests that it does. Moreover, transnational and national approaches in examining a historical period or theme are not mutually exclusive. National interests greatly influenced and distinguished contributions to transnational dialogues, particularly, in the diffusion of ideas.<sup>58</sup> The following chapters will show how the unique

<sup>55</sup> ‘AHR Forum: Entangled Histories in the Atlantic World’, *The American Historical Review*, 112:3, (June 2007): 710-799; ‘The “Trade Gap” in Atlantic Studies: A Forum on Literary and Historical Scholarship’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 65:1, (January 2008): 135-186.

<sup>56</sup> David Armitage, ‘Three Concepts of Atlantic History,’ in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, edited by David Armitage and Michael Braddick, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 11-27.

<sup>57</sup> Alison Games, ‘Atlantic History and Interdisciplinary Approaches’, *Early American Literature*, 43:1, (2008): 187-190; Idem, ‘Atlantic history: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities’, *American Historical Review*, 111:3, (2006): 741-757. *The Atlantic Enlightenment* (2008) offers an excellent example of how multidisciplinary approaches, namely in the fields of philosophy, history, and literature, sheds new light on understanding the interconnectivity of the late eighteenth and nineteenth-century Atlantic World (Francis Cogliano and Susan Manning (eds.), *The Atlantic Enlightenment*, (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008)).

<sup>58</sup> Two prominent examples of how a distinct philosophy and a philosophical school developed from Scotland’s culture and its contribution to the transnational Republic of Letters are Alexander Broadie, *A History of Scottish Philosophy*, (EUP, 2009); Nicholas Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (eds.), *Scotland in the Age of Improvement: essays in Scottish history in the eighteenth century*, (EUP, 1996).

circumstances in Scotland and the United States influenced the receptions of Scottish philosophy and prominent ‘Moderate’ beliefs as examples of the Scottish Enlightenment in the Atlantic World.

The comparative nature of a transatlantic approach could be seen as challenging for three reasons. First, without a clear narrative and an explicit overall argument, comparative studies often run the risk of appearing disjointed. Secondly, the transatlantic connections or disconnections drawn must be treated as existing in different national contexts as well as being linked in the wider Atlantic World. Finally, there must be a significant reason why a comparison in a transatlantic context contributes something that a ‘cis-Atlantic’ approach could not. This study demonstrates how Stewart’s and Smith’s programmes of moral education were connected by their use of Scottish philosophy and appeal to the ‘Moderate’ ideology of the Scottish Enlightenment. The different contexts in which they taught these ideas and values encouraged different modifications, particularly, in response to counter-Enlightenment factions of clergymen. Only a comparative study of this kind can demonstrate how different national circumstances influenced the adaptation and defence of Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy in the Atlantic World.

As an example of intellectual and cultural history, this project is heavily influenced by the writings of Quentin Skinner, William Bouwsma, and Richard Rorty. According to Rorty, intellectual history analyzes the conception, transmission, and reception of ideas and culture without imposing anachronistic beliefs as a way to accommodate contemporary concerns.<sup>59</sup> While analytic philosophy, often associated with the history of philosophy, investigates contemporary applications to timeless philosophical debates, it does not account for the historical contexts that influenced a

<sup>59</sup> Richard Rorty, ‘The historiography of philosophy: four genres’, in *Philosophy in History*, edited by Rorty, Skinner, and Schneewind, (CUP, 1984), 67-74.

particular philosophical debate or tradition. Skinner remarked that ‘no agent can eventually be said to have meant or done something which he could never be brought to accept as a correct description of what he had meant or done’.<sup>60</sup> Interpretations of philosophy must therefore consider the historical contexts in which they emerged and existed. In this regard, William Bouwsma suggests that philosophy treated within the contexts of its time permits a more nuanced understanding of its meaning.<sup>61</sup> By devoting equal attention to Smith’s and Stewart’s moral thought, this study examines the various ways in which applied ethics touched upon other branches of knowledge. Moreover, the reasons for their adaptations of Scottish philosophy reflected the national circumstances in which they were taught as well as cultural and intellectual attachments within the Atlantic World.

This project is not an intellectual biography of Stewart and Smith, but rather sheds new light on a significant part of Stewart’s and Smith’s moral thought. Although biographical memoirs of Stewart and Smith appeared shortly after their deaths, they did not fully explain their respective accomplishments in education.<sup>62</sup> The fact that there is only one modern biography of Stewart’s life and none for Smith provides further proof of neglect.<sup>63</sup> This study reevaluates Smith’s and Stewart’s historical significance as moral educators in a transatlantic context. To date, no full-scale attempt has been made to explain Smith’s and Stewart’s systems of moral education, the significant role of the

<sup>60</sup> Quentin Skinner, ‘Meaning and understanding in the history of ideas’, *History and Theory*, 8:1, (1969): 28.

<sup>61</sup> William Bouwsma, ‘From History of Ideas to History of Meaning’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 12, (1981): 279-92.

<sup>62</sup> Mathew Stewart, ‘Memoir of the late Dugald Stewart, Esq.’, in *Annual Biography and Obituary for the year 1829*, vol. seven, (London): 256-269; John Veitch, ‘The Life of Dugald Stewart’, in *Collected Works of Dugald Stewart*, edited by William Hamilton, vol. ten, (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable and Co., 1858); Fredrick Beasley, ‘An account of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Samuel Stanhope Smith’, *Analectic Magazine*, n.s., I (June 1820): 443-74.

<sup>63</sup> Gordon Macintyre, *Dugald Stewart: The Pride and Ornament of Scotland*, (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2003).

‘moral faculty’ within these systems, or the reasons for their tension with counter-Enlightenment factions.

My discussion of Smith and Stewart draws heavily on their lecture notes as well as their published and unpublished manuscripts on moral philosophy.<sup>64</sup> Stewart’s and Smith’s published textbooks offer the best source for their ideas on moral education.<sup>65</sup> Stewart’s *Outlines of Moral Philosophy* (1793), which appeared in several editions during his lifetime, provided an outline of his ideas on central philosophical themes and Smith’s ‘A System of Moral Philosophy for the Students of Nassau Hall’ served a similar function. In discussing the nuances of their moral thought, Smith’s *Lectures* (1812) and Stewart’s *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1792) delineate their concepts of moral education and examples of its practical application. Their other publications on morals and metaphysics likewise include relevant material; their central ideas on education, however, were best expressed in the previously mentioned sources.<sup>66</sup> Evidence

<sup>64</sup> The Special Collections at Edinburgh University Library houses student notes from Stewart’s lectures on moral philosophy. DS Lectures on MP 1789-90, taken by an unknown student, EUL Gen. 1987-9; DS Lectures on MP 1793-4, taken by Archibald Bell, EUL Dc.4.97; DS Lectures on MP 1796-9, taken by J.M. Lee, EUL MS Dc.8.143; DS Lectures on MP Winter 1801-2, taken by James Bridges, EUL MS Dc.5.88; DS Lectures on MP 1806-7 taken by John Borthwick, EUL Gen. 843; and DS Lectures on MP 1808-9, taken by Archibald Alison, EUL Gen. 1382. The Seeley Mudd Manuscript Library at Princeton University houses copies of Smith’s lectures on moral philosophy during 1804 and Princeton University Library’s Manuscripts Division houses one copy of Smith’s ‘A System of Moral Philosophy for the Students of Nassau Hall’ circa 1805, in Smith collection C0028. Smith’s published lectures on moral philosophy during the year of his retirement provide the most comprehensive source of his lectures of moral philosophy.

<sup>65</sup> Consistent with the practises of their time, Stewart and Smith published textbooks to assist their students’ comprehension and permit them opportunities to digress as they pleased. Dugald Stewart, *Outlines of Moral Philosophy, for the use of students in the University of Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1793); Samuel Stanhope Smith, *The Lectures, Corrected and Improved, which have been delivered for a series of years in the College of New Jersey; on the subject of Moral and Political Philosophy*, (Trenton: James Wilson, 1812).

<sup>66</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Biographical Memoirs of Adam Smith, LL.D., of William Robertson, D.D., and Thomas Reid, D.D.*, (Edinburgh: George Ramsay and Company, 1811); Idem, *Lectures on Political Economy*, two vols, edited by Sir William Hamilton, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1877); Idem, *Philosophical Essays*, (Edinburgh: George Ramsay and Company, 1815); Idem, *The Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man*, (Edinburgh: Adam Black, 1828); Samuel Stanhope Smith, *Sermons*, (Newark, NJ: Jacob Halsey and Co., 1799); Idem, *A Comprehensive View of the Leading and Most Important Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion*, second edition, (New Brunswick: Deare & Myer, 1815); Idem, *An Essay on the Causes of Variety of the Complexion and Figure in the Human Species*, second edition, (New Brunswick: J. Simpson and Co., 1810).

from correspondence, diaries, faculty and trustee minutes, and newspapers found at Edinburgh and Princeton repositories suggests that politicians, ministers, students, parents, and faculty members discussed the merit and demerit of their systems of moral education, its service for secular interests, and its effect on diffusing Christian principles.

There have been several excellent articles on Stewart's and Smith's influence as professors of moral philosophy.<sup>67</sup> Of this research, Knud Haakonssen and Mark Noll have dominated the respective historiographies.<sup>68</sup> The following treatment of Smith as primarily appealing to Reid and Scottish 'Moderatism' diverges from Noll's argument that Smith followed a version of Witherspoon's so-called 'republican Christian Enlightenment'. This project's understanding of Stewart's moral thought in relation to other prominent Scottish moralists and Scottish 'polite' culture is heavily influenced by the writings of Haakonssen and Nicholas Phillipson. Furthermore, my approach to Stewart's notion of education builds upon the earlier work of Jennifer Tannoeh-Bland

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<sup>67</sup> Nicholas Phillipson, 'The pursuit of virtue in Scottish university education: Dugald Stewart and Scottish moral philosophy in the Enlightenment', in *Universities, Society and the Future*, edited by Phillipson, (EUP, 1983), 82-101; Donald Winch, 'The system of the North: Dugald Stewart and his pupils', in *That noble science of politics: A study of nineteenth-century intellectual history*, edited by Stefan Collini, Donald Winch, and John Burrow, (CUP, 1983), 23-62; Edward Madden, 'Stewart's Enrichment of the Common sense Tradition', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 3:1, (1986):45-63; Knud Haakonssen, 'Introduction' in reprint of 1854-60 edition, *The Collected Works of Dugald Stewart*, edited by Idem, (Bristol: Thoemes, 1994), v-xiv; Jennifer Tannoeh-Bland, 'Dugald Stewart on intellectual character', *British Journal for the History of Science*, 30:3, (1997): 307-320. Jane Rendall, 'Adaptations: History, Gender and Political Economy in the Work of Dugald Stewart', *History of European Ideas*, 38:1, (March 2012): 143-161. Samuel Monk's and William Hudnut's articles on Smith provide a wealth of insight into his import at Princeton. William Hudnut, 'Samuel Stanhope Smith: Enlightened Conservative', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 17:4, (1956): 540-552; Samuel Monk, 'Samuel Stanhope Smith (1751-1812): Friend of Rational Liberty', in *The Lives of Eighteen from Princeton*, edited by Willard Thorp, (PUP, 1946), 86-110. For references that directly related to this project see my 'In Defence of the Scottish Enlightenment: Dugald Stewart's role in the John Leslie Case', *Scottish Historical Review*, 92:1, (2013): 000; 'The Science of Applied Ethics at Edinburgh University: Dugald Stewart on moral education and the "auxiliary principles of the moral faculty"', *Intellectual History Review*, 22:4, (Dec., 2012): 000; 'Samuel Stanhope Smith and Common Sense Philosophy at Princeton', *The Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, 8:2, (Sep., 2010): 189-209.

<sup>68</sup> Noll, *Princeton*; Knud Haakonssen, *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy: From Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment*, (CUP, 1996), 226-248; Idem, 'From moral philosophy to political economy: The contribution of Dugald Stewart', in *Philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment*, edited by V. Hope, (EUP, 1984), 211-32.



and Donald Winch in exploring the contexts in which Stewart taught and his influence on prominent Scottish Whigs.<sup>69</sup>

Douglas Sloan's *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal* (1971) has greatly influenced several aspects of this project, primarily by showing that a transatlantic approach is valuable in understanding the influence of Scottish thought on early American higher education.<sup>70</sup> Sloan investigates how early American colleges and Presbyterian academies drew from Scottish Enlightenment thought and values with case studies of Francis Alison, John Witherspoon, Samuel Stanhope Smith, and Benjamin Rush. In discussing Smith, Sloan remarked that 'as forces of an aggressive Protestantism gathered in the early years of the new century, Smith found himself standing more and more alone, the representative of an earlier time'.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, Smith became alienated largely from his use of Reidian themes and 'Moderate' beliefs toward the end of his career at Princeton. Yet was he the only moral philosophy professor who defended Scottish Enlightenment ideals from the obstruction of counter-Enlightenment policies? This question sparked the conceptual starting point of this project. By comparing Smith's system of moral education with Stewart's, this thesis demonstrates how 'Moderate' values and Scottish philosophy were adapted in moral education whilst shedding new light on the tensions between late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy and versions of counter-Enlightenment in the Atlantic World.

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<sup>69</sup> Donald Winch, 'The system of the North: Dugald Stewart and his pupils', in *That noble science of politics*, (CUP, 1983), 23-62; Jennifer Tannoeh-Bland, *The Primacy of Moral Philosophy: Dugald Stewart and the Scottish Enlightenment*, unpublished doctoral dissertation at Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia (December 2000).

<sup>70</sup> Douglas Sloan, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1971).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.



## **Structure**

This thesis has two main parts. The first consists of three chapters on Dugald Stewart's system of moral education: the circumstances in which Stewart developed his system of moral education from 1790 to 1794, Stewart's applied ethics in treating the 'auxiliary principles of the moral faculty', and finally, his defence of the Scottish Enlightenment in the context of the 1805 John Leslie case. Complementing the chronology and themes in part one, the second part consists of three chapters on Smith's system of moral education: the circumstances in which Smith created the Princeton Enlightenment between 1794 and 1799, the role of the 'moral faculty' within his system of moral education, and lastly, Smith's defence of his programme in the context of what he saw as two converging counter-Enlightenment campaigns from 1800 through 1812. The concluding chapter examines the question why the academic careers of Smith and Stewart represented the final days of the Scottish Enlightenment in the Atlantic World and the epilogue on James McCosh's administration at Princeton supports this conclusion whilst offering an opening for future research.

The first chapter, 'Building Upon Reid's Legacy', explores how Stewart as an intellectual product of the Scottish Enlightenment interpreted mid-eighteenth-century 'Moderatism' and how these values were put into effect in his programme of moral education. Michael Brown suggests that Stewart's appeal to the thought and values in writing biographical memoirs of Adam Smith (1793), William Robertson (1796), and Thomas Reid (1802) justified his teaching of moral philosophy by establishing a canon of orthodoxy of which he could appeal. Indeed, Brown's argument is correct and can be modified to include Stewart's earlier publications. His *Elements* (1792) and *Outlines* (1793) explain and justify his system of moral education before authoring these

biographical memoirs.<sup>72</sup> Jennifer Tannoch-Bland argues that Stewart did more than ‘popularize’ Reid’s Common Sense philosophy as Norman Daniels, Anand Chitnis, and Bruce Lenman suggest.<sup>73</sup> In agreement with Tannoch-Bland, this chapter goes further by demonstrating the reasons why and how Stewart developed a modern version of Reid’s philosophical system. These adaptations of Scottish philosophy came in response to the circumstances of his time, namely the Scottish reception of the French Revolution, the 1793-1794 Scottish Sedition Trials, and the rise of counter-Enlightenment policies associated with the Henry Dundas interests. Similar to Reid, Stewart attempted to combat modern philosophical scepticism. He extended this aim to oppose other forms of radicalism with particular attention to the emergence of counter-Enlightenment policies that targeted the teaching of natural religion and metaphysics. In doing so, Stewart’s programme of moral education exercised the innate faculties of the mind with the objective of conditioning his students to discern on their own the difference between truth and error. He believed ‘it is the business of education, not to counteract, in any instance, the established laws of our constitution, but to direct them to their proper purposes’.<sup>74</sup> From this conviction, Stewart’s system of moral education provided a practical and modern version of Reid’s Common Sense philosophy that was intended to prevent the adoption of modern philosophical scepticism whilst opposing the acceptance of counter-Enlightenment policies at Edinburgh University.

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<sup>72</sup> Michael Brown, ‘Creating a Canon: Dugald Stewart’s Construction of the Scottish Enlightenment,’ *History of Universities*, vol. XVI, (2000), 135-154.

<sup>73</sup> Jennifer Tannoch-Bland, *The Primacy of Moral Philosophy*, 2; Norman Daniels, *Thomas Reid’s Inquiry: The geometry of visible and the case for realism*, (New York: Ayer Publishing, 1974), 120; Anand Chitnis, *The Scottish Enlightenment: A Social History*, (London: Croom Helm, 1976), 175; Bruce Lenman, *Integration, Enlightenment, and Industrialization: Scotland 1746-1832*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 95.

<sup>74</sup> Stewart, *Elements*, 388.

His teaching of practical ways in which his audience, primarily young men, could develop virtuous habits and prevent bad intellectual habits forms the theme of chapter two, 'The Science of Applied Ethics'. This chapter traces the practical nature of Stewart's system of moral education and his ideas on social improvement in treating the four 'auxiliary principles of the moral faculty'. These principles consisted of the 'moral taste', 'sensing the ridiculous', 'sensing decency', and 'sympathy'. Although these principles have not attracted scholarly attention, they reveal how Stewart sought to improve the human condition as part of civil society. Stewart remarked that 'in order to secure still more completely the good order of society, and to facilitate the acquisition of virtuous habits, nature has superadded to our moral constitution a variety of auxiliary principles, which sometimes give rise to a conduct agreeable to the rules of morality and highly useful to mankind'.<sup>75</sup> Of these four principles, Stewart devoted more attention in treating 'moral taste' and 'sympathy'; these four principles, however, relied upon each other for their advancement and cultivation. In discussing his treatment of these principles, this chapter examines Stewart's vision of a benevolent and intellectually vibrant society led by virtuous citizens and how the application of his programme of moral education could realise this ambition.

The third chapter, 'In Defence of the Scottish Enlightenment', explores Stewart's role in the 1805 John Leslie case where he defended Leslie and secularism in the Faculty of Arts at Edinburgh University. The new Moderate party of the Church of Scotland threatened Stewart's system of moral education by insisting that candidates for professorial chairs should also hold ecclesiastical positions. The Presbytery of Edinburgh exercised this practise in their 1805 endorsement of Thomas McKnight's candidacy for the Chair of Mathematics. The circumstances of the chair canvass turned controversial

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<sup>75</sup> Stewart, *Outlines*, 1:154.

when “Moderate” clergymen of Edinburgh attacked John Leslie, a well-respected scientist with no affiliation to the Church of Scotland, for his questionable religious principles. The Moderates were offended by Leslie’s Whiggish ideas of liberal scientific progress and promotion of Humean thought expressed in Note Sixteen attached to his *Inquiry into the Nature and Propagation Heat* (1804). Stewart had a prominent role in proving that Leslie’s praise of Hume’s premises on the theme of ‘causation’ in nature did not imply that he endorsed Hume’s mitigated scepticism. While the Leslie case was charged with political, ideological, ecclesiastical, and philosophical concerns as shown by Ian Clark, John Burke, J.B. Morrell, and John Wright, it ultimately centered on the extent of the Church’s involvement in university affairs.<sup>76</sup> This chapter suggests that Stewart’s defence of Leslie embodied his on-going campaign to safeguard his programme of moral education from the obstruction of counter-Enlightenment interests. His appeal to Reidian thought amongst other Scottish philosophers in the context of the Leslie affair sought to

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<sup>76</sup> Clark discussed the agendas between the Scottish ecclesiastical parties and the specific theological arguments waged against Leslie by the Moderates. He argued that ‘ecclesiastical and secular politics played an important part in the struggle, but what was really at stake was “moderatism” as a theological and ecclesiological system’ (Ian Clark, ‘The Leslie Controversy, 1805’, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 14, (1962): 179). Burke explored the earlier tension between David Hume and James Beattie over Hume’s controversial theory on causality and the subsequent philosophical and ecclesiastical repercussions of Leslie’s public fiasco. He argued that ‘the election of Leslie and his subsequent trial, however, while surrounded by conflict and ill will, did succeed in producing a rapprochement between theological dogma and the scientific enterprise; and further, it directed attention to one of the most important philosophical problems involved in the search for scientific knowledge’ (John Burke, ‘Kirk and Causality in Edinburgh, 1805’, *Isis*, 61:2, (1970): 354). Morrell oriented his investigation around the unpublished private correspondence of John Leslie that conveyed his intimate thoughts of his public ordeal with James Brown, Joseph Banks, and Thomas Wedgewood. By primarily investigating Leslie’s point of view, Morrell revealed Leslie’s tumultuous history with the Hill family who dominated St. Andrews University and his frustration expressed during the 1805 ordeal as what he interpreted as a personal attack. Ultimately, Morrell concluded ‘there is, then, evidence to confirm that the chief components of the Leslie affair were personal feuds, and differences of party and ecclesiastical politics’ (J.B. Morrell, ‘The Leslie affair: careers, kirk and politics in Edinburgh in 1805’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 54:1, (1975): 79). Wright provides a philosophical analysis of John Leslie’s infamous Note Sixteen, Dugald Stewart’s defence of Leslie, the Moderate clergymen’s interpretation of Hume’s theory of causation, and Thomas Brown’s defence of Leslie. Wright argued that ‘what developed from these charges was an elaborate debate about the interpretation of Hume’s accounts of causation and causal power, and their implications for rational religion’ (John Wright, ‘The Scientific Reception of Hume’s Theory of Causation: Establishing the Positivist Interpretation in Early Nineteenth-Century Scotland’, in *Hume and Hume’s Connexions*, edited by John Wright and M.A. Stewart, (EUP, 1994), 15).

re-establish the earlier 'Moderate' belief of tolerance and support for the teaching of Enlightenment science, particularly the science of the mind.

The fourth chapter, 'The Princeton Enlightenment', explores the contexts in which Samuel Stanhope Smith developed and applied his programme of moral education at Princeton. After succeeding Witherspoon as Princeton's seventh president in 1795, Smith took immediate action in reforming Princeton's curriculum. For a better picture of how Smith's reforms changed Princeton's traditional religious purpose, this chapter first discusses the College of New Jersey's strong connection with American religious revivalism and examines its later reception of Scottish philosophy.<sup>77</sup> Samuel Holt and William Hudnut have shown that Smith united his religious convictions with an enthusiasm for fostering scientific progress.<sup>78</sup> Yet they do not show how Smith's initiatives transformed Princeton into America's premier institution for liberal education and how this purpose contrasted with Witherspoon's earlier administration. Smith's use of Scottish philosophy underpinned his creation of the Princeton Enlightenment. While Sydney Ahlstrom and Mark Noll have shown that American Evangelicals drew from Scottish thought, Smith's moral thought differed from his Evangelical brethren.<sup>79</sup> Contrary to treating Smith as an intellectual disciple of Witherspoon's so-called 'republican Christian Enlightenment', this chapter demonstrates the reasons why and how

<sup>77</sup> This section explores Smith's connections with Presbyterian academies, religious revivalists who founded the College of New Jersey, and Witherspoon's reforms of the curriculum. Two prominent works that influence this discussion are Ned Landsman, 'Presbyterians, Evangelicals and the Educational Culture of the Middle Colonies', *Pennsylvania History*, 64, (Summer, 1997): 168-182; Gideon Mailer, 'Anglo-Scottish union and John Witherspoon's American Revolution', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 67:4, (Oct., 2010): 709-746.

<sup>78</sup> William Hudnut, 'Samuel Stanhope Smith: Enlightened Conservative,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 17:4, (1956): 540-552; Samuel Monk, 'Samuel Stanhope Smith (1751-1812): Friend of Rational Liberty,' in *The Lives of Eighteen from Princeton*, edited by Willard Thorp, (PUP, 1946), 86-110.

<sup>79</sup> Mark Noll, 'Common Sense Traditions and American Evangelical Thought', *American Quarterly*, 37:2, (Summer, 1985): 216-238; Sydney Ahlstrom, 'The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology', *Church History*, 24:3, (Sep., 1955): 257-272.

Smith expanded Enlightenment science in preparing future statesmen of the early republic and from enhancing the arts at Princeton, he hoped to rival Edinburgh's success.

In league with Princeton's reception of the French Revolution, the emergence of political party tensions between the Federalists and the developing Republicans created a divisive atmosphere in the final years of the eighteenth century. Meanwhile, Smith's Princeton Enlightenment attracted considerably more students with the promise of 'enlightened learning' comparable to that found in Europe. Amongst this increased student body, Smith saw factions of unruly students as so-called 'Jacobins'. He interpreted 'Jacobin' principles as a form of radical counter-Enlightenment that dismissed his system of moral education. Smith's response to these respective conflicts from the classroom occupies the focus of chapter five, 'The Primacy of the Mind at Princeton'. From the belief that times of conflict and domestic hardships created excellent opportunities for scientific innovation, he advanced the Princeton Enlightenment. Contrary to Evangelicals such as Reverend Ashbel Green, Smith taught that the exercise of the 'moral faculty' and its 'rules of duty' was the best way to combat so-called 'French Impiety' and unite Americans under shared values. Smith's mingling of metaphysics and revealed religion alarmed Green who believed Witherspoon's legacy and Christian principles were improperly enforced at Princeton. This chapter suggests that Smith's teaching of the 'moral faculty' and the 'rules of duty' shed new light on how his applied ethics addressed the circumstances of the time.

The sixth chapter, 'Princeton's War of 1812', examines how Smith resisted what he saw as two converging counter-Enlightenment campaigns during the first decade of the nineteenth century. Between 1800 and 1807, a faction of rebellious students (known by Smith as 'Jacobins') resisted Princeton's authority with various acts of vandalism, protest, and rebellion. As Steven Novak has shown, the dilemma of preventing vicious

conduct from unruly young men was not exclusive to Princeton.<sup>80</sup> Despite this wider uprising of American youth, Princeton was unique insofar as it struggled between two conflicting solutions to youthful rebellions: an expansion of Smith's system of moral education and a revival of Christian principles. As a member of Princeton's Board of Trustees, Ashbel Green orchestrated a campaign to remove Smith's system of moral education. Alarmed by how Smith's programme fell short in producing future ministers and the perceived presence of irreligion amongst the students, Green and like-minded Evangelicals questioned the content of Smith's moral philosophy. Complementing Mark Noll's thorough discussion of Princeton's 1807 'Great Rebellion', this chapter connects how earlier student disruptions established the 'Jacobin' tradition at Princeton.<sup>81</sup> Instead of expanding the efforts to diffuse Christian principles as Evangelicals demanded, Smith utilized 'Jacobin' activities to enhance his system of moral education and improve Princeton's campus. In the course of addressing Smith's tensions with these converging counter-Enlightenment movements, this chapter suggests reasons why Smith's programme of moral education and its creation of a Princeton Enlightenment gradually declined until meeting its end in 1812.

The following chapters suggest that the battles between the late eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment moral thought and emerging counter-Enlightenment movements were fought at institutions of higher education on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Steven Novak, *The Rights of Youth: American Colleges and Student Revolt, 1798-1815*, (HUP, 1977).

<sup>81</sup> Mark Noll, 'Before the Storm: Life at Princeton College, 1806-1807', *PULC*, 42, (1981): 145-164; Idem, 'The Princeton Trustees of 1807: New Men and New Directions', *PULC* 41, (1980): 208-230; Idem, 'The Response of Elias Boudinot to the Student Rebellion of 1807: Visions of Honor, Order, and Morality', *PULC*, 43 (1981): 1-22.

<sup>82</sup> While George Davie credits the Reform Bill of 1832 as a defining moment towards ending 'the peculiar institutional inheritance of Scottish Democracy' associated with its Enlightenment, David Allan traced the steady decline of the primacy of Scottish moral philosophy decades before the passing of this Act. George Davie's important work on the role of Scottish thought in nineteenth-century Scottish universities did not include a discussion on the first decade of the nineteenth century or its

William Hamilton and James Ferrier were celebrated successors of the Scottish School of Common Sense, but neither rivaled Stewart's success nor his systematic efforts to sustain and modernise Scottish thought. Across the Atlantic at Princeton, Smith's programme of moral education marked the last full-scale effort to institutionalize an American version of the Scottish Enlightenment. As David Hoeveller, Bradley Gundlach, and W.B. Carnochan have shown, the 1868 appointment of James McCosh, signified a turning point of the earlier counter-Enlightenment movement.<sup>83</sup> McCosh certainly reintroduced a sophisticated teaching of Scottish philosophy whilst harboring Enlightenment ambitions for Princeton. But McCosh's restructuring of Princeton's curriculum, which will be examined in the epilogue, did not resemble Smith's earlier Enlightenment where the primacy of the mind provided the overarching institutional purpose. By treating these prominent moral pedagogues, Smith and Stewart, within the contexts in which they taught, this thesis sheds new light on the adaptation of Scottish thought and values in the face of fierce counter-Enlightenment opposition during the final years of the Scottish Enlightenment in the Atlantic World.

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early American reception. See George Davie, *The Democratic Intellect: Scotland and the Universities in the Nineteenth Century*, (EUP, 1961), 287; David Allen, *Virtue, Learning, and the Scottish Enlightenment: ideas of scholarship in early modern history*, (EUP, 1993).

<sup>83</sup> J. David Hoeveller, *James McCosh and the Scottish Intellectual Tradition: From Glasgow to Princeton*, (PUP, 1981); Bradley Gundlach, 'McCosh and Hodge on Evolution: A Combined Legacy', *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 75:2, (1997): 85-102; W.B. Carnochan, *The Battleground of the Curriculum: liberal education and American experience*, (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993).



## **Part One**

### **Dugald Stewart and the Scottish Counter-Enlightenment**

## Chapter One

### **Building Upon Reid's Legacy: Dugald Stewart's programme of moral education, 1789-1802**

Reflecting on early nineteenth-century Edinburgh, the author and jurist Henry Cockburn wrote that 'in an age which requires all the dignity of morals to counteract the tendencies of physical pursuits and political convulsion, [Dugald Stewart] has exalted the character of his country and his generation'.<sup>1</sup> As the professor of moral philosophy at Edinburgh University from 1785 to 1810, Stewart flourished as one of the most influential moral educators of his time. Although Stewart was active during the decline of the Scottish Enlightenment, his thought cannot be explained without reference to the previous generation of enlightened *literati*. Stewart claimed that 'I shall follow the footsteps of those illustrious men who have gone before me on this subject, Hutcheson, Reid, Smith and Ferguson; adapting at the same time as the professor of this science should always do my lessons to the time I live in and the situation in which I am placed'.<sup>2</sup> Yet his appeal to Scottish Enlightenment philosophers as well as numerous others in the Republic of Letters did more than 'popularize' Scottish philosophy for a new age.<sup>3</sup> In adapting Scottish philosophy to the circumstances of his time, Stewart sought to sustain late eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment thought and 'Moderate' values from the obstruction of counter-Enlightenment policies.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Cockburn, *Memorials of His Time*, vol. one, (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1856), 26.

<sup>2</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy 1793-1794*, taken by Archibald Bell, EUL Dc.4.97, 24.

<sup>3</sup> See introduction, fn72. In examining Stewart's methodology with particular attention to his ongoing feud with Francis Jeffrey, Tannoch-Bland has shown that Stewart's achievements were more substantial than strictly adhering to Reid's earlier thought (Tannoch-Bland, *The Primacy of Moral Philosophy*, 2-29). This chapter furthers this assessment by investigating Stewart's system of moral education with particular attention on the contexts in which it was created and taught.

<sup>4</sup> By reviewing the corpus of Stewart's writings on history, gender, and political economy, Jane Rendall has shown that Stewart's adaptations of the writings of previous theories were not limited to

At a time when counter-Enlightenment factions of clergymen and politicians—clustered around Henry Dundas—were increasingly hostile toward free expression, particularly ideas promoting social and political liberty, the education of impressionable young men was the subject of fierce debate. As Biancamaria Fontana has shown, these counter-Enlightenment interests resulted ‘in the viral paralysis of political and intellectual life in Edinburgh’.<sup>5</sup> Responding to this situation, Dugald Stewart created one of his greatest contributions to Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy and ‘Moderate’ values: a modern system of moral education. But to what extent should Stewart’s programme of moral education be seen as a reaction to counter-Enlightenment policies and should Stewart be considered a representative of the earlier generation of Scottish *literati*?

Stewart’s experience as a professor’s son and later as a tutor and professor at Edinburgh University during William Robertson’s administration certainly developed his reverence for ‘Moderate’ values.<sup>6</sup> While many of these beliefs were expressed through his political affiliation with the Scottish Whig party, Stewart’s appeal to Thomas Reid’s Common Sense philosophy advanced a more elaborate purpose of ‘Moderate’ values in the wake of the French Revolution. Of the various philosophical themes taught in the three branches of his moral philosophy course,<sup>7</sup> Stewart’s treatment of the ‘moral faculty’

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morals (Jane Rendall, ‘Adaptations: History, Gender and Political Economy in the Work of Dugald Stewart’, *History of European Ideas*, 38:1, (March 2012): 143-161. While Rendall’s examination included Stewart’s thoughts on education and its reception by women writers of the time, this chapter’s attention to the circumstances that gave rise to Stewart’s system of moral education sheds new light on the ambition of this programme and how it modernised Scottish philosophy for the interests of a new generation.

<sup>5</sup> Biancamaria Fontana, *Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society: The Edinburgh Review, 1802-1832*, (CUP, 1985), 11.

<sup>6</sup> See Gordon Macintyre, *Dugald Stewart: The Pride and Ornament of Scotland*, (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2003), 14-36.

<sup>7</sup> Stewart’s lectures on moral philosophy consisted of three parts: the intellectual powers of man, the active and the moral powers of man, and man considered as the member of a political body. From

and the branches of duty as ‘active and moral powers of the mind’ best portrays how he sought to combat counter-Enlightenment policies whilst upholding central ‘Moderate’ beliefs. The exercise of these faculties gradually developed virtuous habits within ‘real life’ situations. In doing so, Stewart’s programme of moral education heavily influenced a generation who would later defend the ‘Moderate’ ideals of the Scottish Enlightenment as prominent members in the Scottish Whig party.<sup>8</sup>

Stewart’s significance in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment occupies the attention of the thesis’s first part. Before exploring the role of his applied ethics in Scottish ‘polite’ culture and his later defence of Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy in the context of the 1805 John Leslie case, this chapter will first investigate the circumstances that gave rise to Stewart’s system of moral education. Stewart’s early affiliation with the Moderate literati of Edinburgh, the emergence of counter-Enlightenment policies, and his promotion of the science of mind as the best source for improving morals and society had a part in his creation of this pedagogical system. In the course of examining these areas, this chapter suggests reasons why Stewart (considered by some to be the ‘Scotian Plato’) received a devoted following as well as opposition from emerging counter-Enlightenment interests.<sup>9</sup>

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popular demand, Stewart taught political economy as a separate course from 1800 until his 1810 retirement from active teaching.

<sup>8</sup> See John Clive, *Scotch Reviewers: The Edinburgh Review, 1802-1815*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1957).

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Campbell, ‘An Ode to Dugald Stewart’, on 31 Dec 1806, EUL MS 35480.

### **Dugald Stewart in the age of Scottish 'Moderatism', 1753-1785**

On a 1771 tour of Scotland, the Scottish author and surgeon Tobias Smollett declared that Edinburgh 'is a hot-bed of genius'.<sup>10</sup> He observed that 'even the Kirk of Scotland, so long reproached with fanaticism and canting, abounds at present with ministers celebrated for their learning, and respectable for their moderation'.<sup>11</sup> Through his friendship with Rev. Dr Alexander 'Jupiter' Carlyle,<sup>12</sup> Smollett socialised with William Robertson, Adam Smith, Hugh Blair, and Adam Ferguson.<sup>13</sup> With the exception of Smith, this group of Edinburgh clergymen and professors were celebrated for their 'Moderate' values. Richard Sher remarked that 'nowhere else did clergymen and professors make up such a large proportion of the men of letters or produce so many major works of polite literature'.<sup>14</sup> As an operating ideology, 'Moderatism' consisted of leading ideals of the Enlightenment such as religious tolerance, free expression, humanitarianism, cosmopolitanism, and scientific improvement.<sup>15</sup> These values were justified from the conviction that philosophical truths, Enlightenment science (both physical and metaphysical), and 'polite' sociability could coexist with an enlightened interpretation of Calvinist principles.

The concept of 'Moderatism' did not necessarily imply taking the middle ground or vacillating between positions in philosophical or ecclesiastical debates. Instead, this ideology opposed forms of extremism. The Moderates of Edinburgh staunchly defended

<sup>10</sup> Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, vol. three, (London: W. Johnston and B. Collins, 1771), 5.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> See Alexander Carlyle, *Autobiography of the Rev. Dr Alexander Carlyle minister of Inveresk*, edited by Burton Hill, second edition, (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1861), 527.

<sup>13</sup> Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, 6.

<sup>14</sup> See Sher, *CU*, 151.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 328.

academic patronage in the Kirk and the right of clergymen to participate in ‘polite’ culture by, for example, attending the theatre.<sup>16</sup> Their appreciation of genius and tolerance of controversial ideas was evinced from their socialising with David Hume who was widely known as a sceptic. Thomas Ahnert argues that ‘while Moderates did not necessarily agree in every respect with the ideas of such figures such as David Hume or Lord Kames, they did block an attempt by the more conservative members of the General Assembly in 1755-6 to have these two philosophers excommunicated for their allegedly blasphemous moral theories’.<sup>17</sup> The Moderates’ victory in the 1757 Douglas Affair over the Evangelical party (who at that time endorsed many counter-Enlightenment interests) denoted their early dominance of ecclesiastical politics.<sup>18</sup> In light of their prominence, Nicholas Phillipson suggests ‘there is an important sense in which the history of the Scottish Enlightenment is the history of Edinburgh’.<sup>19</sup>

At the heart of the ‘Moderate’ Enlightenment in Edinburgh, William Robertson’s administration of Edinburgh University from 1762 to 1793 and leadership of the Moderate party of the Church of Scotland linked ‘Moderate’ values with Scottish

<sup>16</sup> See Roger Emerson, *Academic Patronage in the Scottish Enlightenment: Glasgow, Edinburgh and St Andrews universities*, (EUP, 2008), 150-177.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Ahnert, ‘Clergymen as polite philosophers: Douglas and the conflict between Moderates and Orthodox in the Scottish Enlightenment’, *Intellectual History Review*, 18:3, (2008): 375-376.

<sup>18</sup> For further reading on the Douglas Affair and the differences between the Moderates and Evangelicals reference Thomas Ahnert, ‘Clergymen’, 375-383; On the different interests within the Kirk, reference Friedhelm Voges, ‘Moderate and Evangelical Thinking in the Later Eighteenth Century: Differences and Shared Attitudes’, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 22, (1986): 141-158.

<sup>19</sup> See Nicholas Phillipson, ‘Towards a Definition of the Scottish Enlightenment’, in *City and Society in the Eighteenth-century*, edited by Fritz and Williams, (Toronto: Hakkert, 1973), 147. On the central role of Edinburgh in the Scottish Enlightenment also reference John Gibson, ‘How did the Enlightenment seem to the Edinburgh Enlightened?’, *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 1, (1978): 46-50; James Buchan, *Capital of the Mind: How Edinburgh Changed the World*, (London, 2003). Compelling evidence for the existence of distinct Enlightenments in Glasgow and Aberdeen suggests Edinburgh did not have the only claim for embracing ‘Moderate’ interests. For further reading on the Enlightenment in Glasgow and Aberdeen reference Jennifer Carter and Joan Pittock (eds.), *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment*, (AUP, 1992); Paul Wood, *The Aberdeen Enlightenment*, (AUP, 1993); Andrew Hook and Richard Sher (eds.), *The Glasgow Enlightenment*, (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 1995).

institutions.<sup>20</sup> Robertson advanced this ambition with the establishment of new secular chairs and influenced the appointment of prominent Scottish Enlightenment men of letters.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, 'Moderates' harmonised their values with Calvinist principles from Edinburgh pulpits.<sup>22</sup> In league with their achievements from didactic and ecclesiastical offices, the 'Moderates' were active authors whose publications circulated with considerable success throughout the British Atlantic World.<sup>23</sup> These ideas and values were not confined to Edinburgh lecture halls, churches, or in print. Like other interest groups of this time, the Moderates' met weekly to test and debate ideas at a number of Edinburgh literary and philosophical societies.<sup>24</sup> For example, their debates within the 'Select Society' (established in 1754) and the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh (established in 1737) furthered the 'Moderates' reputation as a cohesive group of

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<sup>20</sup> See R.G. Cant, 'The Scottish Universities and Scottish Society in the Eighteenth Century', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 58, (1967): 1953-6.

<sup>21</sup> Nicolas Phillipson noted that during Robertson's administration every University chair became vacant and 'such was Robertson's formidable standing with the Senatus, the town council and the government that all but a handful went to his nominees; indeed, it was only in the 1780s, when his health was failing, that his influence showed signs of waning' (Nicholas Phillipson, 'The Making of an Enlightened University', in *The University of Edinburgh: An illustrated history*, edited by Robert Anderson, Michael Lynch, and Nicholas Phillipson, (EUP, 2003), 79-81). For further discussion of Robertson's administration reference Roger Emerson, *Academic Patronage in the Scottish Enlightenment: Glasgow, Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities*, (EUP, 2008), 9; J.B. Morrell, 'The University of Edinburgh in the Late Eighteenth Century: Its Scientific Eminence and Academic Structure,' *Isis*, 62:2, (Summer, 1971): 158-171.

<sup>22</sup> Sher, *CU*, 151-174.

<sup>23</sup> See Richard Sher, *The Enlightenment & the Book: Scottish authors & their publishers in Eighteenth-century Britain, Ireland & America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 443-596. For further reading on Scottish readership during this period reference Mark Towsey, *Reading the Scottish Enlightenment: Books and Their Readers in Provincial Scotland, 1750-1820*, (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishing, 2010); John Crawford, 'Reading and Book Use in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *Bibliothek*, 19, (1994): 23-43; Idem, 'The Ideology of Mutual Improvement in Scottish Working Class Libraries', *Library History*, 12, (1996): 49-61; R.A. Houston, 'Literacy, Education and the Culture of Print in Enlightenment Edinburgh', *History*, 78, (1993): 373-92.

<sup>24</sup> For further reading on the Moderates participation in Edinburgh clubs and societies reference Davis Dunbar McElroy, *Scotland's Age of Improvement: A survey of eighteenth-century literary clubs and societies*, (Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press, 1969); John Clive, 'The Social Background of the Scottish Renaissance', in *Scotland in the Age of Improvement: Essays in Scottish History in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Phillipson and Mitchison, (EUP, 1970), 225-244.

savants.<sup>25</sup> Reflecting on Robertson's role in the 'Select Society', Dugald Stewart remarked that 'while it lasted, Dr Robertson contributed his most zealous support...deriving from it an addition to his own fame'.<sup>26</sup> Despite receiving praise across the Republic of Letters, the Moderates' phenomenal success did not endure. Their rapid ascent to influential offices within the Kirk and University was followed by an equally swift decline in the 1790s. This transition followed the 1791 election of George Hill (principal of St Andrews University) to the leadership of the ecclesiastical Moderate party. Hill gradually replaced the earlier 'Moderate' beliefs with counter-Enlightenment interests. Hill's close affiliation with his patron Henry Dundas strengthened a counter-Enlightenment campaign that allegedly safeguarded impressionable youth by entrusting their education to clergymen. This objective challenged the practise of secularism in the faculty of arts at Scottish universities. As the ambitions of Hill's Moderate party were allied with conservative politicians later known as 'Tories', Dugald Stewart undermined its success by diffusing the thought and values of the earlier 'Moderates' in teaching moral philosophy. From birth Stewart was well placed to become a 'Moderate' and later defend this ideology.

In the old college buildings of Edinburgh at Whitsunday, the professor of mathematics Matthew Stewart welcomed the birth of Dugald on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1753.<sup>27</sup>

As an attentive father, Matthew Stewart had a profound influence on his son's intellectual

<sup>25</sup> See Roger Emerson, 'The Philosophical Society of Edinburgh 1737-1747', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 12:2, (1979): 154-191; Idem, 'The Philosophical Society of Edinburgh 1768-1783', *The British Society for the History of Science*, 18:3, (Nov., 1985): 255; Idem, 'The Social Composition of Enlightened Scotland: the "Select Society of Edinburgh", 1754-1764', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 114, (1973): 291-330; Kathleen Holcomb, 'A Dance in the Mind: the Provincial Scottish Philosophical Societies', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 21, (1991): 89-100.

<sup>26</sup> Dugald Stewart, 'Account of the Life and Writings of William Robertson', first read at the Royal Society of Edinburgh on 21 March 1796, in *Biographical Memoirs, of Adam Smith, LL.D., of William Robertson, D.D., and of Thomas Reid, D.D.*, (Edinburgh: George Ramsay and Company, 1811), 167-168.

<sup>27</sup> Macintyre, *Dugald Stewart*, 11.



development whilst providing familial connections to the Church of Scotland.<sup>28</sup> His embrace of academic patronage as a minister, contribution to scientific innovation, esteem for Francis Hutcheson, and his friendship with prominent 'Moderates' such as William Robertson were some reasons why he should be considered a 'Moderate'.<sup>29</sup> These 'Moderate' qualities and beliefs among others were certainly on display during Dugald Stewart's childhood.

As the professor of mathematics, Matthew Stewart was provided with a residence near the South Bridge in Edinburgh just a short walk from the Old College building.<sup>30</sup> In addition to living in close proximity to the University, the Stewarts had six professors, including the principal William Robertson, as neighbours. Although the Stewart family

<sup>28</sup> Dugald was named after his paternal grandfather who was a Presbyterian minister at Rothsay Church in the Isle of Bute (John Playfair, 'Account of Matthew Stewart,' read at the Royal Society of Edinburgh on 3 April 1786, in *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, 1, (Edinburgh: J. Dickson, 1788): 57).

<sup>29</sup> In 1734, Matthew Stewart had enrolled at Glasgow University with the intention of joining his father (who also held the name Dugald) as a Presbyterian minister (Ibid). Like other divinity students, Stewart diversified his studies by attending Francis Hutcheson's lectures on moral philosophy and Robert Simson's lectures on mathematics (Ibid., 57-8). Often considered as the father of Scottish moral philosophy, Hutcheson heavily influenced the foundations of Scottish moral philosophy to which the 'Moderates' of Edinburgh later appealed. Knud Haakonssen and Luigi Turco offer excellent discussions on Hutcheson's moral philosophy and its significant role in the Scottish Enlightenment. See Knud Haakonssen, *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy: from Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment*, (CUP, 1997), 63-84; Luigi Turco, 'Moral Sense and the Foundations of Morals', in *CCSE*, 136-56. Martin Fitzpatrick argued that 'as in other aspects of [Hutcheson's] work, over the issue of patronage he articulated the attitudes of the emerging moderate interest in the Church' (Martin Fitzpatrick, 'The Enlightenment, politics and providence: some Scottish and English comparisons', in *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, edited by Knud Haakonssen, (CUP, 1996), 74). Stewart attended Hutcheson's lectures when his *Considerations on Patronage, Addressed to the Gentlemen of Scotland* first appeared in 1735. His position as a minister at Rothsneath church later in life whilst pursuing academic interests through the patronage of the Earl of Roseneath and the Duke of Argyle evinced that Stewart supported academic patronage (Playfair, 'Account of Matthew Stewart', 60). Although there is no evidence that suggests Stewart supported or opposed Hutcheson's moral thought since his research interests never strayed from mathematics, he probably held it in a similar regard as his 'Moderate' contemporaries. Encouraged by Robert Simson professor of mathematics at Glasgow University, Stewart furthered his research interests under the guidance of Colin MacLaurin at Edinburgh University. After the death of MacLaurin in the summer of 1746, Stewart's *Some General Theorems of Considerable Use in the Higher Parts of Mathematics* (1746) proved the deciding factor in his 1747 appointment as MacLaurin's successor. For further reading on MacLaurin reference J.V. Grabiner, 'MacLaurin and Newton: The Newtonian Style and the Authority of Mathematics', in *Science and Medicine in the Scottish Enlightenment*, edited by Withers and Wood, (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 2002), 143-171.

<sup>30</sup> Macintyre, *Dugald Stewart*, 10.

later spent half the year at their house Catrine in Ayrshire during the University's recess, Edinburgh's intellectual culture remained a considerable part of their daily lives.<sup>31</sup> At eight years old, Dugald Stewart joined William Robertson's son, 'Willie', at the nearby Royal High School of Edinburgh where it was said 'men of the highest and lowest rank in society [sent] their children to be educated together'.<sup>32</sup> During his four years at High School, Stewart's father supplemented the rector Alexander Matheson's lessons with further exercises in mathematics. Apart from Stewart's proficiency in mathematics, Alexander Adam (who replaced Matheson in Stewart's final months at High School) introduced his lifelong appreciation for classical Roman and Greek literature.<sup>33</sup>

In the autumn of 1765, Stewart commenced a degree in arts at Edinburgh University. This degree required attending all the courses in the Faculty of Arts such as rhetoric, logic, moral philosophy, natural philosophy, and mathematics. Stewart's earlier mastery of geometry rendered attendance at his father's course unnecessary. He did, however, attend John Stevenson's course on logic, Hugh Blair's lectures on rhetoric and *belles lettres* as well as Adam Ferguson's lectures on moral philosophy twice.<sup>34</sup> The concepts taught in Blair's and Ferguson's courses played a prominent role in developing his moral philosophy. Like many Scots who attended Blair's course, Stewart actively

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Henry Brougham quoted in Ibid., 14. Brougham later attended Stewart's lectures on moral philosophy as a young man and contributed to the *Edinburgh Review*.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 14-16. Adam's pedagogical interest in Roman literature extended to authoring a book on Roman manners, which received five Edinburgh editions before his 1809 death. See Alexander Adam, *Roman Antiquities: or, an Account of the Manners and Customs of the Romans*, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1791). For further reading on Adam reference Alexander Henderson, *An Account of the Life and Character of Alexander Adam, LL.D., Rector of the High School of Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh: D. Shaw and Son, 1810). Adam's role in the Scottish Enlightenment, however, has received woefully little attention.

<sup>34</sup> Stevenson held the chair of logic since 1730 and taught many of his future colleagues such as Blair and Robertson (Macintyre, *Dugald Stewart*, 20-22).

sought to refine his 'polite' manners and improve upon the exposition of his prose.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, Adam Ferguson's examination of the modern relevance of ancient Rome certainly appealed to young Stewart's interests. As a Gaelic speaking Highlander from Perthshire, Ferguson was different from his 'Moderate' contemporaries.<sup>36</sup> In addition to upholding 'Moderate' beliefs and a version of Stoicism in the classroom, his membership of the 'Poker Club' and 'Select Society' suggests his different background did not exclude him from activities within the 'Moderates' social circle. Ferguson's moral philosophy was best known for his ideas on the relationship between human nature and the progress of society.<sup>37</sup> Although Stewart did not follow Ferguson's version of Stoicism, his attention to sociological and historical factors that gave rise to morals within society heavily influenced Stewart's later thought.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, it was Ferguson who identified Stewart's aptitude for moral philosophy and encouraged him to cultivate this talent under Thomas Reid's instruction at Glasgow University. In 1771, at the age of seventeen with a degree from Edinburgh completed, Stewart relocated to Glasgow.

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<sup>35</sup> The following chapter will provide a more in-depth discussion of how Stewart appealed to Blair's writings.

<sup>36</sup> See David Allan, *Adam Ferguson*, (EUP, 2006), 1-20.

<sup>37</sup> Ferguson taught that 'in treating [man] as a subject of moral science, we endeavour to understand what he ought to be; without being limited, in our conception, to the measure of attainment or failure, exhibited in the case of any particular person or society of men' (Adam Ferguson, *Principles of Moral and Political Science: Being chiefly a retrospect of lectures delivered in the College of Edinburgh*, vol. one, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1792), 2). For further reading on Ferguson's moral philosophy reference John Bernstein, 'Adam Ferguson and the Idea of Progress', *Studies in Burke and His Time* (now *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*), 19, (1978): 99-118; David Allan, *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment: Ideas of scholarship in early modern history*, (EUP, 1993), 216. For further reading on Ferguson's treatment of how historical progress informed notions of virtue reference Adam Ferguson, *History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic*, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1783); Idem, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, (Edinburgh: Kincaid and Bell, 1767).

<sup>38</sup> Stewart referenced and quoted several sections of Ferguson's *History of Civil Society* in the third part of his lectures on moral philosophy from 1789 through 1799. From 1800 through 1810, Stewart continued discussing Ferguson's *History* in his lectures on political economy, but paid little attention to Ferguson's moral philosophy in his *Outlines* or lectures apart from citing his work in a footnote as an example of Stoicism (Dugald Stewart, *Outlines of Moral Philosophy, for the use of students in the University of Edinburgh*, second edition, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1801), n287).

As previously discussed in the introduction, Thomas Reid's Common Sense philosophy provided an alternative to modern philosophical scepticism (known by him as the 'Ideal Theory').<sup>39</sup> Reid's 'principles of common sense' later formed the 'fixed principles' of Stewart's moral philosophy. How Stewart's later writings enriched Reid's legacy at the dawn of a new age will be discussed in the following sections. While the ideas and friendships (including Archibald Alison) that developed during Stewart's time in Glasgow cemented a life spent investigating the principles of the mind, this formative period of learning did not last beyond a year. Due to the declining health of his father, Stewart returned to Edinburgh and taught his father's course on mathematics between 1772 and 1785.<sup>40</sup>

Stewart's tenure in this office reflected his devotion to his father rather than a deep satisfaction from teaching mathematics. In a letter to William Robertson, Stewart requested that 'if a vacancy [in moral philosophy] should take place I would have you start with me without delay, and take such steps as appear to yourself to be most prudent without waiting a moment to consult me'.<sup>41</sup> Robertson honoured Stewart's wishes with the assistance of Ferguson. Shortly after Matthew Stewart's death on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1785, the Town Council agreed to accept Stewart's and Ferguson's resignations from their respective chairs. Afterwards they appointed Stewart as the professor of moral philosophy and provided Ferguson with a salary as the joint professor of mathematics with the newly appointed John Playfair.<sup>42</sup> Although Stewart's "elections" as professor of

<sup>39</sup> See introduction, 9-16. For a more detailed examination of how Common Sense philosophy challenged modern philosophical scepticism reference Heiner Klemme, 'Scepticism and Common Sense', in *CCSE*, 117-135.

<sup>40</sup> See Macintyre, *Dugald Stewart*, 25.

<sup>41</sup> Stewart to Robertson, quoted in *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>42</sup> Although Playfair and Ferguson both drew a salary as professors of mathematics, Playfair exclusively taught the course until his 1805 appointment as professor of natural philosophy (*Ibid.*, 46).

mathematics and later moral philosophy appeared to be a birthright, he soon discovered that the 'Moderate' Enlightenment of his youth was under attack from counter-Enlightenment policies. As the professor of moral philosophy at Edinburgh, no one was better prepared or situated than Stewart to defend the so-called 'Moderate' values of Robertson's administration.

### **Dugald Stewart and the Scottish Counter-Enlightenment, 1790-1802**

Dugald Stewart created and refined his system of moral education during an age of revolutions (French Revolution and Britain's Industrial Revolution). Meanwhile, the French Revolution strengthened the justification of emerging British counter-Enlightenment policies. The Scottish response to the French Revolution (particularly after the 1793-1794 'Reign of Terror') reflected the fear that Scottish institutions could share a similar fate as France's ancien régime. John Veitch, a nineteenth-century Scottish historian and philosopher, wrote that 'the dread shadow of the French Revolution lay heavily on the minds of those in power, and party interest and existence were identified by them with the maintenance of the constitution [and] every change was therefore deemed revolutionary, and every novelty dreaded as a fatal innovation'.<sup>43</sup> This counter-Enlightenment mindset—championed by Henry Dundas and his associates—jeopardised the tolerance for scientific, literary, and philosophic innovations which William Robertson had laboured to establish at Edinburgh University.<sup>44</sup> Of Dundas's agents, George Hill's leadership of the Moderate party transitioned these counter-Enlightenment

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<sup>43</sup> John Veitch, *Memoir of Sir William Hamilton*, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1869), 76.

<sup>44</sup> See David Brown, 'Henry Dundas and the Government of Scotland', (unpublished PhD, University of Edinburgh, 1989). For a contrasting view of Dundas's activities reference Michael Fry, *The Dundas Despotism*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1992), 155-206.

policies as influential interests within the Church of Scotland.<sup>45</sup> Hill's allegiance to Dundas at this time was not an overstatement. Shortly after his 1791 election to the Principality of St. Andrews University, Hill wrote to Dundas

I will not attempt to express by words the gratitude which I feel, but it shall be the study of my life to preserve, as a clergyman, in that conduct upon which you have generously conferred repeated marks of your approbation, and to make every exertion in my power, as a member of the University, to maintain the credit, and to preserve peace.<sup>46</sup>

Hill's notion of preserving the peace closely coincided with Dundas's counter-Enlightenment policies. From the early 1790s through Dundas's 1805 impeachment, the Moderate party (with powerful factions at St Andrews and Edinburgh) advanced Dundas's interests within the Kirk. Since Hill and his cohort gradually leaned toward a more fundamentalist interpretation of Calvinism, the former 'Moderate' values of religious tolerance and free expression were replaced with counter-Enlightenment efforts to safeguard Christian principles.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, the new Moderate clergymen targeted secularism in the liberal arts and curricula that strayed from religious orthodoxy.<sup>48</sup> This campaign demarcated the emergence of a new radical counter-Enlightenment interest within the so-called Moderate party.<sup>49</sup>

Dugald Stewart believed that the counter-Enlightenment efforts to prevent the spread of atheism and political radicalism created a vacuum for their adoption and practise. He suggested that the censorship of controversial theories did not address the foundations of allegedly misguided philosophical scepticism and political radicalism.

<sup>45</sup> See George Cook, *The Life of the Late George Hill D.D., Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews University*, (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company, 1820), 213-4.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>47</sup> See Emma Vincent Macleod, 'The responses of Scottish churchmen to the French Revolution, 1789-1802', *SHR*, 73:196, part 2, (Oct., 1994): 191-215.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> See Ian Clark, 'From protest to reaction: the moderate regime in the church of Scotland, 1752-1805', in *Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, edited by Phillipson and Mitchison, (EUP, 1970), 200-224.

Instead, Stewart believed these ideas must be shown as false. His opposition to radicalism extended to clergymen with counter-Enlightenment views towards the teaching of metaphysics and natural religion. Stewart wrote:

Certain divines in Scotland were pleased, soon after this critical era, to discover a disposition to set at nought [sic] the evidences of Natural Religion, with a professed, and, I doubt not, in many cases, with a sincere view to strengthen the cause of Christianity. Some of these writers were probably not aware that they were only repeating the language of Bayle, Hume, Helvetius, and many other modern authors of the same description.<sup>50</sup>

He taught that the prerogative of enlightened men was to combat the 'errors' of the French Revolution (its association with philosophical scepticism not its pursuit for political liberty) and radical responses to these ideas. Consequently, this proposed task received staunch opposition from counter-Enlightenment factions.

Stewart's response of the French Revolution as well as his reaction to counter-Enlightenment policies were central to the development of his system of moral education. Like many of his Scottish Whig contemporaries, Stewart had supported the revolutionary principles that emerged in France.<sup>51</sup> As a witness to the early stages of the French Revolution during a 1788 tour of France with his student George Ramsay, the language of political equality and social leveling excited Stewart. Although he later wrote to Archibald Alison the following year when he returned to Paris that the elections in the *Tiers Etat* were 'by no means respected by the people of rank in this country, and who are certainly of all men the least qualified for new-modeling a constitution', he endorsed the

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<sup>50</sup> Dugald Stewart, *The Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man*, vol. one, (Edinburgh: Adam Black, 1828), vi.

<sup>51</sup> Prominent Scottish Whigs, such as William Robertson, Henry Erskine, and Archibald Fletcher celebrated the removal of the French aristocracy, which they believed to be corrupt and contrary to the ideals of liberty and Enlightenment. See Bob Harris, *The Scottish People and the French Revolution*, (London: Pickering and Chatto Publishers, 2008); Henry Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution*, (Glasgow, 1912), 49.



early objectives of this uprising.<sup>52</sup> Despite opposing the later so-called ‘barbarities at Paris’, he remained hopeful that ‘the storm may blow over, and that the mercantile interest of the country may have the sense and spirit to come forward as they ought’.<sup>53</sup> While tensions flared between Britain and France, Stewart agreed with the minority of Parliament that a war would ‘risk the prosperity and the tranquility of this country [and] it will open a new source of political events, the final cause of which is beyond calculation’.<sup>54</sup> A month after expressing these concerns, on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1793, France declared war against the United Kingdom. The outbreak of war provided the necessary traction for counter-Enlightenment attacks against the diffusion of revolutionary ideas. Despite political differences, Dundas and Edmund Burke (a member of the Whig party) shared the belief that Thomas Paine’s *Rights of Man* (1791) encouraged radical acts of political defiance and rebellion.<sup>55</sup> In this controversial work, Paine wrote that ‘it is the free and unbiased voice of society that is to decide their rights and comforts, and when they feel them perverted or diminished, it is their province to renovate them’.<sup>56</sup> Shortly before France’s ‘Reign of Terror’, Stewart openly endorsed Paine’s concept of political liberty. For example, in reference to the birth of Archibald Alison’s son, Stewart pledged that ‘I promise to do all I can to make him a Philosopher and an Economist; and I engage, as soon as he begins to snuff, to make him the present of a very handsome box which I

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<sup>52</sup> Stewart to Alison, in *Collected Works of Dugald Stewart*, edited by William Hamilton, vol. ten, (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable and Company, 1858), cxxiv.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, cxxxvi.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> For an example of this shift in Whig ideology see Edmund Burke, *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, in consequence of some late discussions in Parliament, relative to the Reflections on the French Revolution*, (London: J. Dodsley, 1790). In the third edition of this pamphlet (1791), Burke wrote that ‘Mr Paine’s works had been extensively and industriously circulated throughout England and Scotland’. (*Ibid.*, 432). On the British criticisms of Paine reference H.T. Dickinson, ‘Thomas Paine and his British Critics’, *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 27, (2011): 19-82.

<sup>56</sup> Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*, (London: J.S. Jordon, 1791), iv.



received lately, with the *Rights of Man* inscribed on the lid'.<sup>57</sup> Yet Stewart's support of political and social reform was not limited to Paine's writings.

As early as 1792, Scottish liberals expressed interest in progressive political reforms from within the first National Convention of the Friends of the People in Scotland.<sup>58</sup> Clearly inspired by events in France, the Friends of the People sought better representation of public interests in Parliament but achieved little due to internal discord.<sup>59</sup> As an attendant, Stewart observed that the Convention was 'a set of men brought together from different corners of the country, full of mutual jealousy and distrust; and you may believe that those who are afterwards to guide their deliberations, will be the least forward to not show themselves till they know their ground'.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, Stewart distanced himself from the Friends of the People after the subsequent meetings became decidedly more radical. Despite his support for greater representation of popular interests in Parliament, Stewart identified himself as a 'North Briton' and did not entertain ideas of overthrowing the government.<sup>61</sup> He sought, however, to improve the state of society under the Constitution. Thomas Reid held a similar view of the French Revolution at this time. Reid wrote in 1791:

Some few here think or affect to think that to be a Friend to the Revolution of France is to be an Enemy to the Constitution of Britain, or at least to its present

<sup>57</sup> Stewart to Alison 1793, in *Collected Works*, vol. ten, cxxxv. In an ironic turn of events, Archibald Alison later became a prominent 'Tory' in Victorian Scotland whose publications ardently opposed the French Revolution. For further reading on Alison reference Michael Michie, *An Enlightenment Tory in Victorian Scotland: The Career of Sir Archibald Alison*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997).

<sup>58</sup> See Richard Brown, *Church and State in Modern Britain 1700-1850*, (London: Routledge, 1991), 343.

<sup>59</sup> See Mark Philp, 'The Fragmented Ideology of Reform', *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, edited by Idem, (CUP, 1991), 50-78.

<sup>60</sup> Stewart to Alison 29 October 1792, in *Collected Works*, vol. ten, cxxxiv.

<sup>61</sup> See Colin Kidd, 'North Britishness and the Nature of Eighteenth-Century British Patriotisms', *Historical Journal*, 39, (1996): 361-82.

Administration. I know the contrary to be true in my self, & verily believe that most of my Acquaintance who Rejoice in that Revolution agree with me in this.<sup>62</sup>

This conventional Whiggish belief was not new (albeit increasingly dangerous to express in the public sphere), but his teaching of these political sentiments attracted the attention of counter-Enlightenment proponents.

From 1793 through 1794, Stewart ventured beyond abstract concepts in teaching systems of government as he had done in previous years. By discussing the importance of the Habeas Corpus Act, Stewart took a firm stance in a fiercely debated policy of the time. In a 1794 lecture, Stewart remarked:

This act can never be suspended except in cases of the most urgent necessity by a solemn act of the legislative body, which sometimes, for a very limited space, permits the executive power to imprison suspected persons at will, and without assigning any reason for so doing. This measure is similar to the 'Senatus consultum ultimae necessitatis' of the Romans, which preceded the election of a dictator and is adapted with similar caution.<sup>63</sup>

Shortly after teaching that Habeas Corpus was vital for British liberty, it was suspended in May 1794. Led by the efforts of Henry Dundas,<sup>64</sup> this suspension lasted until July 1795 and was once again suspended from April 1798 through March 1801.<sup>65</sup> As an active member of the 'Speculative Society', Stewart questioned 'if any circumstances justify the

<sup>62</sup> Thomas Reid, *The Correspondence of Thomas Reid*, edited by Paul Wood, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 224.

<sup>63</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy 1793-4*, taken by Archibald Bell, EUL Dc.4.97, 360.

<sup>64</sup> From the offices of the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1791-1793), War Secretary (1794-1801) and representing Edinburgh in the House of Commons (1790-1802), Henry Dundas, was central in the 1794 suspension of Habeas Corpus. See *The Parliamentary Register; or History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Lords*, (London: J. Debrett, 1794), 71-72; R.G. Thorne, *The House of Commons, 1790-1820*, vol. one, (London: Haynes Publishing, 1986), 81.

<sup>65</sup> The Habeas Corpus Act, established under the reign of Charles II in 1679, was slightly different than the previously established writ of Habeas Corpus, which prevented the unlawful detention of those charged with a crime through petitioned pleas to the court. The Habeas Corpus Act provided legislation that English Magistrates or Judges could not imprison suspected criminals without evidence as practised in the writ of Habeas Corpus. However, the 1679 Act did not extend to Scotland, Ireland and British colonies (*The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, edited by K.M. Brown, (St Andrews, 2007-2010), 1700/10/234). The Act of 1701 and the later 1707 Anglo-Scottish Treaty of Union extended the Habeas Corpus to Scotland as part of the incorporated union. The Act Anent Wrongous Imprisonment was the Scottish equivalent to the Habeas Corpus Act, which Parliament also suspended at this time. The irregularity of the Scottish Sedition Trials demonstrated the loss of British liberties that the Habeas Corpus Act and the Act Anent Wrongous Imprisonment safeguarded.

suspension of Habeas Corpus' amongst a diverse group of Whig and politically conservative University students.<sup>66</sup>

During this period, Stewart's fears over the consequences of suspending Habeas Corpus were realised in the 1793-1802 Scottish Sedition Trials. These trials exemplified how counter-Enlightenment policies censored the free expression of political and philosophical ideas. Whig Parliamentary ministers, including the Earl of Stanhope, shared Stewart's concerns that 'such an entrapping mode of trial' corrupted the judicial process and led to despotism.<sup>67</sup> These objections, however, had little effect. Those convicted of sedition faced sentences of imprisonment, transportation to the British colonies, and social contempt as perceived dangers to British political, social and moral order. The consideration of the defendant's intentions rendered sedition as a criminal act both peculiar and subjective. Later, as a Scottish judge, Cockburn noted that sedition was considered the 'only offence as against the public, though this offence may be committed by libeling individual public officers as such, that is dealt with as sedition by the law of Scotland'.<sup>68</sup> Stewart's praise of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*, attendance of the first

<sup>66</sup> Stewart's list of questions proposed at a Speculative Society's Tuesday meeting was undated but probably appeared between 1793 and 1802, EUL Ds.6.111, MS 35480.

<sup>67</sup> *The Parliamentary Register; or History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Lords*, (71-2).

<sup>68</sup> Henry Cockburn, *An examination of the trials for sedition which have hitherto occurred in Scotland*, vol. one, (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1888), 3. In light of this ambiguity and the difficulty in determining viable evidence, from 1703 through 1848 only twenty-three cases of sedition were tried in Scottish courts. Of these twenty-three cases, nine cases were tried in Scottish courts between 1793 and 1802 with the next recorded case occurring in 1817 (Ibid., 2). Of these trials, Thomas Muir's sedition trial received considerable transnational attention. Muir, a Glasgow jurist and leader of the Friends of the People, was sentenced to fourteen years' at Botany Bay, Australia for his support of political reform and his dissemination of Paine's *Rights of Man*. Muir was charged with four distinct crimes of sedition that involved exciting disaffection by seditious speeches, advising the purchase, use of seditious publications and circulating these seditious publications and reading them in public. After furnishing no evidence that Muir spoke against the Constitution, circumstantial evidence such as his travels to France whilst on bail contributed to his conviction. After hearing the verdict, Muir stated that 'when our ashes shall be scattered by the winds of heaven, the impartial voice of future times will rejudge your verdict' (Ibid., title page). For further reading on Muir's case reference Thomas Muir, *An Account of the Trial of Thomas Muir, Esq. Younger of Huntershill, before the High Court of Justiciary, at Edinburgh, on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> days of August, 1793, for Sedition*, (New York: Samuel Campbell, 1794); Frank Clune, *The Scottish Martyrs: Their trials and transportation to Botany Bay*, (Sydney:

National Convention of the Friends of the People in 1792, travels to revolutionary France, and discussion of controversial philosophers such as David Hume and Condorcet alarmed Scottish counter-Enlightenment advocates that his politics might corrupt impressionable young men.<sup>69</sup>

Stewart's discussion of Condorcet (whose theories were connected with French Revolutionary principles) in *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1792), in particular, led to suspicions that he endorsed political radicalism.<sup>70</sup> Stewart certainly did not support all of Condorcet's political or philosophical views, but they agreed on the liberating qualities of education and its vital importance in an advanced state of society. In quoting Condorcet, Stewart wrote that 'if we attack oppressors, before we have taught the oppressed we shall risk the loss of liberty, [we] rouse them to oppress the progress of reason'.<sup>71</sup> Those associated with counter-Enlightenment interests and even the prominent Scottish Whig Francis Jeffery interpreted these sentiments as dangerous to social order.<sup>72</sup>

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Angus and Robertson, 1969); Marjorie Masson and J.F. Jameson, 'The Odyssey of Thomas Muir', *The American Historical Review*, xxix, (1923): 49-72.

<sup>69</sup> Dugald Stewart received a passport for Paris on 8 September 1792 from Abraham Guyot, Edinburgh University Library Special Collections MS 35480.

<sup>70</sup> Stewart mentioned Condorcet by name seven times in his first major publication. Dugald Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1792), 36, 204, 211, 221, 256, 529, and 555.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 256. In quoting Condorcet, Stewart continued 'How often, in spite of the efforts of the friends of freedom, has the event of a single battle reduced nations to the slavery of ages! And what is the kind of liberty enjoyed by those nations, which have recovered it by force of arms, and not by the influence of philosophy? Have not most of them confounded the forms of republicanism with the enjoyment of right, and the despotism of numbers with liberty? How many laws, contrary to the rights of nature, have dishonoured the code of every people which has recovered its freedom, during those ages in which reason was still in its infancy! Why not profit by this fatal experience, and wisely wait the progress of knowledge, in order to obtain freedom more effectual, more substantial, and more peaceful? Why pursue it by blood and inevitable confusion, and trust that to chance, which time must certainly, and without bloodshed, bestow? A fortunate struggle may, indeed, relive us of many grievances under which we labour at present, but if we wish to secure the perfection, and the permanence of freedom, we must patiently wait the period when men, emancipated from their prejudices, and guided by philosophy, shall be rendered worthy of liberty, by comprehending its claims' (Stewart, *Elements*, 256-257).

<sup>72</sup> As Jennifer Tannoch-Bland has shown, Francis Jeffrey (one of the founding editors of the *Edinburgh Review* and a Scottish Whig) believed Stewart's use of metaphysics should be censored (Tannoch-Bland, *The Primacy of Moral Philosophy: Dugald Stewart and the Scottish Enlightenment*,

After being approached by one of Dundas's agents, Lord Abercromby, Stewart wrote that 'I shall ever regret that I dishonoured some of my pages by mentioning with respect the name of Condorcet'.<sup>73</sup> Since the Scottish Sedition Trials targeted those suspected of diffusing French revolutionary principles, Stewart was under intense pressure to amend his discussion of Condorcet in future editions and lectures. In the second edition of *Elements* (1802), Stewart added a footnote to his discussion of Condorcet's writings:

To some of my readers it may appear trifling to remark, that, in availing myself an occasional coincidence of sentiment with a contemporary Author, I would not be understood to become responsible for the consistency of his personal conduct with his philosophical principles, nor to subscribe to any one of his opinions, but those to which I have expressed my assent by incorporating them with my own composition.<sup>74</sup>

Despite dispelling suspicions that he was a 'Jacobin', Stewart's reaction to his critics did not imply that he failed to challenge counter-Enlightenment policies.<sup>75</sup> Michael Brown has shown that Stewart repositioned his public views on the French Revolution to 'inoculate him from the charge of political heresy' and afterwards was active in combating radical revolutionary principles.<sup>76</sup> This objective became a prominent interest in what would become his system of moral education. On this reformed purpose of his moral philosophy course, Stewart claimed:

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unpublished PhD thesis, Griffith University, 2000). In an 1804 letter to Francis Horner, Jeffrey wrote that 'I think your sensibilities about Stewart somewhat too nice... I have only joined his name with Condorcet's in reference to a subject on which he himself quotes that author [and] I cannot help thinking that there is some value in my view of the limitation of metaphysical discoveries' (Jeffrey to Horner 19 February 1804, in Henry Cockburn, *Life of Lord Jeffrey: with selection from his correspondence*, vol. two, (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1852), 87).

<sup>73</sup> Stewart to Lord Abercromby 1794, quoted in Clive, *Scotch Reviewers*, 108.

<sup>74</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, second edition, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1802), n259.

<sup>75</sup> See John Brims, 'The Scottish "Jacobins", Scottish Nationalism and the British Union', in *Scotland and England, 1286-1815*, edited by Roger Mason, (EUP, 1987), 247-265; Gordon Pentland, 'The French Revolution, Scottish Radicalism and "People Who Were Called Jacobins"', in *Reactions to Revolutions: The 1790s and their aftermath*, edited by Ulrich Broich, H.T. Dickinson, Eckhart Hellmuth, and Martin Schmidt, (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007), 85-108.

<sup>76</sup> Michael Brown, 'Dugald Stewart and the Problem of Teaching Politics in the 1790s', *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, 1:1, (2007): 122-123.

The danger with which I conceived the youth of this country to be threatened by that inundation of skeptical or rather atheistical publications which were then imported from the Continent, was immensely increased by the enthusiasm which, at the dawn of the French Revolution, was naturally excited in young and generous minds [which prompted] me to a more full and systematical illustration of these doctrines than had been attempted by any of my predecessors.<sup>77</sup>

But Stewart's prominent role in preventing the spread of political radicalism and the adoption of philosophical scepticism did not conform to the censorship policies of the counter-Enlightenment movement, which were aligned with the so-called 'Gagging Acts' of 1795.<sup>78</sup> In order to safeguard the development of impressionable young men, Stewart suggested that the public across all ranks in society must be educated to recognise philosophical scepticism and political radicalism as false.<sup>79</sup> This ambition required diffusing a properly regulated programme of moral education that sharpened the 'reasoning and reflective powers and enabled [his students] equally to throw off the chains of superstition and to combat the fallacies of scepticism'.<sup>80</sup> With this objective in mind, Stewart created a system of moral education that addressed the political, social and intellectual conflicts of his time as a modern version of Thomas Reid's Common Sense philosophy. Contrary to the earlier age of 'Moderatism', the climate in Scotland that

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<sup>77</sup> Stewart, *Active and Moral Powers*, vi.

<sup>78</sup> The 'Gagging Acts' of 1795 consisted of two parliamentary acts: the Seditious Meetings Act and the 'Treasonable Practices' Act. The Seditious Meetings Act stipulated that public gatherings of over fifty people required a magistrate's licence. In league with this Act, the Treason Act of 1795 (which revived the earlier Sedition Act of 1661) sought to prevent those who conspired to harm the King, government officials, or oppose the government. It also included transportation as a punishment for those found guilty. See Jennifer Mori, *William Pitt and the French Revolution, 1785-1795*, (Keele: Keele University Press, 1997), 252-259.

<sup>79</sup> Stewart reflected that 'I blush, however, to confess, that even among ourselves it is only *now* that the more candid and intelligent are *beginning* to acknowledge, that the radical source of the calamities of our age has been the ignorance and prejudices of the people; and that it is only by diffusing the light of knowledge and of liberality in those countries which have survived the general storm, that a provision can be made against these political convulsions which, in our own times, have derived their origin from the artifices of ambitious demagogues, operating on the credulity and profligacy of an uneducated multitude' (Dugald Stewart, *Lectures on Political Economy*, vol. one, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1877), 19-20).

<sup>80</sup> Stewart, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy 1793-1794*, 15.

followed the French Revolution was deeply hostile to the purpose of Stewart's programme.

### **Creating a Modern Scottish Philosophy: Stewart's system of moral education**

Dugald Stewart's system of moral education cannot be properly understood without reference to the so-called Scottish School of Common Sense philosophy grouped around Thomas Reid.<sup>81</sup> Reid's efforts in vindicating his philosophical system were not intended to examine comprehensively every philosophical theme and its application in society.<sup>82</sup> Stewart later remarked that Reid 'has exemplified, with the happiest success, that method of investigation by which alone any solid progress can be made; directing his inquiries to a subject which forms a necessary groundwork for the labours of his successors'.<sup>83</sup> Of Reid's disciples, no one rivaled Stewart's success in adapting Reidian principles into an accessible and practical paradigm for moral education.

Yet Stewart did more than 'popularize' Reid's philosophy for a new age, and his enthusiasm for Reid's philosophy did not imply that he strictly followed all of Reid's conclusions. They diverged on several philosophical themes; there are, for example notable differences in their treatment of 'attention', 'conception', and 'imagination' as 'intellectual powers of the mind'.<sup>84</sup> In part, Stewart's adaptations of Reid's philosophy, particularly in discussing the term 'common sense' and the role of hypotheses, reveal

<sup>81</sup> See Paul Wood, 'The Hagiography of Common Sense: Dugald Stewart's *Account of the Life of Thomas Reid*', in *Philosophy, its History, and Historiography*, edited by Holland, (Lancaster: Springer, 1983), 305-322.

<sup>82</sup> See Heiner Klemme, 'Scepticism and Common Sense', in *CCSE*, 117-135.

<sup>83</sup> Dugald Stewart, *An Account of the Life and Writings of Thomas Reid, D.D. F.R.S.*, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1803), 75.

<sup>84</sup> See my 'In Pursuit of "Moral Beauty" and Intellectual Pleasures: Dugald Stewart and Edinburgh's literary culture, 1772-1810', in *The Scottish Enlightenment and Literary Culture*, edited by Kenneth Simpson, Ralph Melean, and Ronnie Young, (Tuckwell Press in association with the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Studies Society, forthcoming in 2014).



their responses to pressing concerns of different circumstances. Stewart claimed that Reid's use of the term 'common sense' to describe intuitive senses misled critics such as Joseph Priestley about the sophisticated nature of this approach. Stewart remarked:

Drs Reid, Beattie, and Oswald, in their answers to Mr Hume's attack upon this kind of evidence, employ very erroneously the expression Common Sense (which is commonly used to express a certain prudence or sagacity possessed by uneducated men) to signify an essential law of our constitution; And have thereby [misled] their opponents, particularly Dr. Priestley of an allegation against them which they by no means deserve.<sup>85</sup>

Stewart's preferred use of the so-called 'fundamental laws of human belief' or 'principles of the human constitution' in teaching Reidian principles could be interpreted as an attempt to avoid such criticisms. But this adaptation of Reid's philosophy amongst others also reflected Stewart's response to counter-Enlightenment attacks against the teaching of metaphysics.

At a time when the mobilisation of the 'uneducated masses' was feared, Stewart certainly wanted to draw a firm distinction between universal powers of the mind and the actions of the so-called 'vulgar'.<sup>86</sup> For Stewart, Reid had not succeeded in this objective.

Reid had claimed:

On the one side stand all the vulgar, who are unpracticed in philosophical researches, and guided by the uncorrupted primary instincts of nature. On the other side stand all the philosophers, ancient and modern, every man without exception who reflects. In this division, to my great humiliation, I find myself classified with the vulgar.<sup>87</sup>

Reid did not deny the merits of further philosophical inquiries in metaphysics, but rather suggested that operating from erroneous philosophical systems improperly exercised and, in turn, corrupted the perfection of the mind. Since the counter-Enlightenment censorship

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<sup>85</sup> Stewart, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, 1793-4, 88-89.

<sup>86</sup> See Bob Harris, 'Political Protests in the Year of Liberty, 1792', in *Scotland in the Age of the French Revolution*, edited by Idem, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 2005), 49-78; For further reading of broader European contexts of public uprisings reference James Van Horn, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*, (CUP, 2001).

<sup>87</sup> Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, (Edinburgh: John Bell, 1785), 135.



policies that followed the French Revolution were predicated on the belief that the public could not discern on their own the difference between true and false philosophy, Stewart advocated that everyone in an advanced society should have a fundamental knowledge of human nature, particularly the 'intellectual, moral and active powers of the mind'. According to Stewart, 'it is such a knowledge alone of the capacities of the mind, that can enable a person to judge of his own acquisitions; and to employ the most effectual means for supplying his defects, and removing his inconvenient habits'.<sup>88</sup> In consequence of the different circumstances, Reid's and Stewart's moral thought reflected fundamentally different concerns. For Reid, the vindication of his alternative to modern philosophical scepticism was paramount; for Stewart, however, the future of metaphysical inquiries depended on combating counter-Enlightenment policies with a superior solution to the intellectual and political trials of his time. Stewart claimed that 'the inclination to scepticism is much more prevalent now than of old: and I think it much more detrimental to the interests of science than over credulity'.<sup>89</sup> Consequently, he taught that hypotheses in metaphysics could reveal unexplored truths in the science of man. Stewart suggested that Reid 'pushed his attack upon hypotheses too far' in claiming that approach did not prove 'any important fact or law of nature'.<sup>90</sup> But he did this with the confidence that his system of moral education prevented the adoption of philosophical scepticism. According to Stewart, 'it is the business of education, not to counteract, in any instance, the established laws of our constitution, but to direct them to their proper purposes'.<sup>91</sup> This task of educating the public to properly exercise the faculties and operations of the mind

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<sup>88</sup> Stewart, *Elements*, 23.

<sup>89</sup> Stewart, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, 1793-4, 12.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>91</sup> Stewart, *Elements*, 388.

whilst elevating intellectual standards required appealing to the practical needs of the public in an accessible way.<sup>92</sup>

Since Stewart followed the Scottish tradition of using professorial chairs to test and perfect philosophical theories in a pedagogical context, his moral philosophy course was intended to instruct and his lectures were made available to the wider public through his publications.<sup>93</sup> He believed that ‘the object of the Philosopher is to inform and enlighten mankind’.<sup>94</sup> Criticised by some for excessive references to earlier and contemporary theorists, his delineation of how ideas developed over time and the dialogue between theorists allowed those unacquainted with philosophy to better understand the progression in the treatment of complex metaphysical themes. His success in this task was best shown in *Dissertations* commissioned by the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.<sup>95</sup> Despite criticisms of Stewart’s writings as ‘vague and heavy’ and not contributing ‘many new truths to the philosophy of mind’, his blend of pedagogy and philosophical inquiry did not lack originality, albeit often hidden.<sup>96</sup> In addition to inserting his opinion in the context of discussing earlier theories (as he had done with Condorcet’s writings), he clearly outlined what he believed a properly regulated moral

<sup>92</sup> While Stewart’s primary audience involved young men, women authors of the time praised Stewart’s programme of moral education. An example of this reception is Elizabeth Hamilton, *Letters on the Elementary Principles of Education*, vol. one, second edition, (London: C. and J. Robinson, 1801). For further reading on Hamilton’s reception of Stewart reference Jane Rendall, “‘Elementary Principles of Education’”: Elizabeth Hamilton, Maria Edgeworth and the Uses of Common Sense Philosophy’, *History of European Ideas*, (forthcoming).

<sup>93</sup> See Gordon Graham, ‘The Ambition of Scottish philosophy’, *The Monist*, 90:2, (2007): 154.

<sup>94</sup> Stewart, *Elements*, 487.

<sup>95</sup> See Dugald Stewart, *Dissertation, exhibiting a general view of the progress of metaphysical, ethical, and political philosophy, since the revival of letters in Europe*, parts one and two, in *Collected Works of Dugald Stewart*, edited by Hamilton, vol. one, (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable and Company, 1854).

<sup>96</sup> Cockburn, *Life of Lord Jeffrey*, 51; Dugald Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, edited by Francis Bowen, (Boston: WH Dennet, 1866), iii. Sir Walter Scott wrote that ‘there is much of water-painting in all his metaphysics, which consist rather of words than ideas’ (Sir Walter Scott, *Journal*, (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1950), 560).

education should entail. According to Stewart, the cultivation of the mind must involve 'a comprehensive survey of human nature in all its parts; of its various faculties, and powers, and sources of enjoyment; and of the effects which are produced on these principles by particular situations'.<sup>97</sup> 'Without some degree of it,' Stewart continued, 'every man is in danger of contracting bad habits, before he is aware; and of suffering some of his powers to go to decay, for want of proper exercise'.<sup>98</sup> He warned that 'it is evident, at the same time, that as no system of education can be perfect, many prejudices must mingle with the most important and best ascertained truths' since they derive from the same source in human nature.<sup>99</sup> Beyond teaching the faculties and powers of the mind, threads of 'Moderate' values concerning cultural tolerance, freedom of expression, and 'polite' sociability were consistently present.

In illustrating the purpose of his course, Stewart taught that the 'object of Moral Philosophy is to ascertain the general rules of a wise and virtuous conduct in life, in so far as these rules may be discovered by the unassisted light of nature; that is, by an examination of the principles of the human constitution, and of the circumstances in which man is placed'.<sup>100</sup> While his teaching of natural religion and metaphysics drew heavily from the earlier writings of Thomas Reid, Stewart advanced a more specific ambition for their application towards exercising virtuous habits in public life.<sup>101</sup> Of the various faculties and methods of exercise taught in his programme of moral education, Stewart's treatment of the 'moral faculty' and the branches of duty as 'active and moral

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<sup>97</sup> Stewart, *Elements*, 23.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>100</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Outlines of Moral Philosophy*, second edition, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1801), 1:11.

<sup>101</sup> See Nicholas Phillipson, 'The pursuit of virtue in Scottish university education: Dugald Stewart and Scottish moral philosophy in the Enlightenment', *Universities, Society and the Future*, edited by Phillipson, (EUP, 1983), 82-101.

powers of the mind', best reflected his ideas on how to improve society. According to Stewart, 'the moral faculty is an original principle of our constitution, which is not resolvable into any other principle or principles more general than itself; in particular, that it is not resolvable into self-love, or a prudential regard to our own interest'.<sup>102</sup> In agreement with Reid, Stewart believed that from this faculty agents exercised 'moral judgments' and determined to act or refrain from action based on imposed duties or obligations to God, others, and themselves independent of external motives. As the source of notions of 'right and wrong', Stewart taught that 'it is absurd to speak of morality as a thing independent and unchangeable', and, as such, actions previously believed to be 'right or wrong' should be treated as complex perceptions existing within distinct contexts. For example, the 'immutability of moral distinctions' was affected by the particular experiences of the agent who judged a respective act. An action in a particular situation, therefore, might be perceived as right and the same action performed in a different context could receive a contrary judgment.

At a time when the Scottish Enlightenment and its counter-Enlightenment advanced different notions of 'right and wrong' and 'merit and demerit', Stewart proposed that through the 'moral faculty' agents could fulfill God's intention concerning moral conduct independent of revealed religion. Similar to Reid, Stewart remarked that 'our ideas of the moral attributes of God must be derived from our own perception [and] it is only by attending to these, that we can form a conception of what his attributes are; and it is in this way we are furnished with the strongest proofs that they really belong to him'.<sup>103</sup> In teaching natural religion and the ways to exercise the divinely inspired

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<sup>102</sup> Stewart, *Active and Moral Powers*, 171.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

faculties of the mind, Stewart did not question the veracity of Scripture.<sup>104</sup> But he did question if ecclesiastical and secular laws were best suited to govern universal moral laws of the 'moral faculty'. Since secular laws could not try a suspect based on the immorality (rather than illegality) of an action, the cultivated ability of the public to do so became important particularly in the context of the time. In lecturing on the prevention and punishment of crimes, Stewart commented that a magistrate 'has no right to punish crimes in a moral view, but only as they tend to disturb the peace & order of society'.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, Stewart treated religious laws with more distrust. He wrote that 'religion is a species of authoritative law, enforced by the most awful sanctions and extending not merely to our actions, but to our thoughts'.<sup>106</sup> By debunking the authority of secular and religious laws to govern innate 'moral laws', Stewart argued for the necessity of exercising the natural inclination to restrain vicious acts and cherish virtue. This contradicted the orthodox Calvinist belief taught by George Hill that revealed religion had absolute moral authority over and was more 'sublime' than 'occasional passages in the writings of philosophers'.<sup>107</sup> Stewart suggested that reliance on secular and religious laws for moral instruction distorted the pursuit of philosophical truths. He, therefore, taught that the 'object in my future lectures will guard you against a bigoted attachment to any opinions, without properly canvassing their truth, a failing extremely prejudicial to the interests of science'.<sup>108</sup> In an important sense Stewart's paramount concern in creating

<sup>104</sup> See B.A. Gerrish, 'Natural and Revealed Religion', in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy*, edited by Knud Haakonssen, vol. two, (CUP, 2006), 641-665.

<sup>105</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy 1796-9*, taken by J.M. Lee, EUL Dc.8.143, 121.

<sup>106</sup> Stewart, *Outlines*, 2:243-1:244.

<sup>107</sup> George Hill, *Lectures in Divinity*, edited by Rev. Alexander Hill, third, (Edinburgh: Waugh and Innes, 1833), 20.

<sup>108</sup> Stewart, *Lectures on moral philosophy, 1793-1794*, 24.

a system of moral education was his opposition to counter-Enlightenment policies (political and religious) that obstructed progress in the science of the mind.

The exercise of the ‘moral faculty’ did not occur within the classroom or exclusively during solitary periods of introspective reflection. Stewart suggested that diverse social interactions and a refined appreciation for the arts exercised the ‘moral faculty’ as well as other ‘intellectual, active and moral powers of the mind’. For instance, the sensations of pain or pleasure of perceiving ‘moral beauty and deformity’ in art and ‘polite’ culture awakened an agent to the moral qualities of ‘polite’ manners, creations, and the ‘moral beauties’ of the natural world. ‘By teaching the youth to associate the ideas of happiness with what is virtuous and good and of pleasure with the pursuits of literature’, Stewart remarked, ‘his choice will be directed to what is right’.<sup>109</sup>

In an appeal to Reid’s treatment of natural religion, Stewart believed God designed the mind with the power to merit moral approbation through the perfection of the ‘moral faculty’. Stewart proposed that ‘in my speculations for instance upon Natural Religion, I will not produce proofs, which taken by themselves would have a conclusive force...but I will shew [sic] you the propriety and reasonableness of the idea [and] I will shew [sic] you that it is from partial and limited views of nature that scepticism arises’.<sup>110</sup> His considerable attention to the divinely imposed duties with respect to a Deity, duties which respect our fellow creatures, and which respect ourselves demonstrated his response to counter-Enlightenment challenges to the teaching of natural religion.<sup>111</sup>

Stewart taught:

<sup>109</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, taken by James Bridges, Winter 1801-1802, EUL Dc.5.88, 43.

<sup>110</sup> Stewart, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, 1793-4, 24.

<sup>111</sup> Stewart, *Active and Moral Powers*, vi.

Such an examination [of the branches of duty], besides, being the reasonable consequence of those impressions which his works produce on every attentive and well-disposed mind, may be itself regarded, both as one the duties we owe Him, and as the expression of a moral temper sincerely devoted to truth, and alive to the sublimest emotions of gratitude and of benevolence.<sup>112</sup>

Stewart qualified that the existence of God and His intentions were not an intuitive truth. Through the faculty of reason and the observation of human nature, however, enlightened men found it probable that God existed. Moreover, the agents' obligation to reflect introspectively on their practise of prudence, temperance, and fortitude, for Stewart, was 'a duty so important and comprehensive, that it leads to the practice of all the rest, and is therefore entitled to a very full and particular examination in a system of Moral Philosophy'.<sup>113</sup> Although everyone benefited from them, the nature of these virtues demanded that agents reflect on their own behavior as separate from the wider public. In discussing an agent's duties to others, Stewart identified the virtues of benevolence, justice, and veracity as obligations to the wider society. He suggested:

Unless we admit these duties to be immediately obligatory, we must admit the maxim, that a good end may sanctify whatever means are necessary for its accomplishment; or, in other words, that it would be lawful for us to dispense with the obligations of gratitude, of veracity, and of justice, when ever, by doing so, we had a prospect of promoting any of the essential interests of society.<sup>114</sup>

These moral obligations of exercising virtue and justice were certainly relevant in the contexts of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, the Scottish Sedition Trials and the counter-Enlightenment's attempts to censor the teaching of metaphysics. By instructing students to value and exercise these branches of duty, Stewart strengthened his students' attachments to moral improvement as members of a wider society. In his final remarks to his class in 1790, Stewart stated 'that in life they should not consider the various times of

<sup>112</sup> Stewart, *Outlines*, 1:173.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:278.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:247.

fortune as the instilments of happiness or misery to them—however—true happiness was to him found in a steady adherence to our duty and in that alone'.<sup>115</sup> By design, every theme taught in Stewart's system of moral education relied upon every other for the full perfection of the mind; certain themes, however, had more practical applications in public life. Stewart's teaching of the 'auxiliary principles of the moral faculty' (which forms the subject of the next chapter) demonstrated the practicality of this faculty when applied in society and how his programme encouraged a benevolent and enlightened state of society.

### **Conclusion**

In the last decade of the eighteenth century, elements of 'Moderatism' in the Scottish Enlightenment appeared to be fading rapidly in the wake of the French Revolution. Counter-Enlightenment policies targeted many of the circumstances that enabled the earlier dominance of the 'Moderate' literati at Edinburgh University. John Veitch remarked that 'the political spirit which in other times had issued in civil war, found outlet and relief in bitter personalities, social hatred, and exclusion [and] such was the state of things, that Dugald Stewart confessed to despair for his country'.<sup>116</sup> Responding to these counter-Enlightenment interests, Stewart adapted Reid's philosophy in creating a system of moral education. He claimed that 'the happiness of Individuals depends very much on fixed principles [and] the characters of the greatest part of the men are formed by the influence of Education, Situation or Example...in consequence of wanting fixed principles their characters suffer as much as their happiness'.<sup>117</sup> Despite

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<sup>115</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy 1789-90*, taken by an anonymous student, EUL Gen. 1987-9, 62.

<sup>116</sup> Veitch, *Memoir of Sir William Hamilton*, 76.

<sup>117</sup> Stewart, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy 1796-1799*, 115.



enduring early tensions over the political nature of his lectures and his favourable discussion of Condorcet, Stewart positioned his moral system as a formidable defence against philosophical scepticism, political radicalism, and the counter-Enlightenment censorship of metaphysics. By creating an accessible and modern version of Thomas Reid's so-called Common Sense philosophy, Stewart contributed to the endurance of Reid's legacy at the dawn of a new age.

In the Scottish context of political tensions and intellectual repression during the 1790s, Stewart's programme of moral education sought to revive the 'Moderate' Scottish Enlightenment through the diffusion of applied ethics. The popularity of his lectures had a considerable influence on rising figures of the Scottish Whig party (such as Francis Horner, Henry Cockburn, Thomas Brown, and Sydney Smith). According to Robert Gillies, 'his class-room was usually so crowded that without going before the hour it was not possible to find a seat; and so desirous it were noble families to obtain his direct advice and guidance for youth, that it was said he had refused the sum of [£] 2000, as annual pension, for one pupil'.<sup>118</sup> Stewart's 'didactic eloquence' was celebrated for diffusing useful knowledge in 'polite' society and securing virtuous habits in the process. His treatment of the 'moral faculty' and the branches of duty, in particular, demonstrated that exercising the innate faculties of the mind were practical for improving morals and the state of society whilst refining 'polite' manners. Stewart's treatment of the 'auxiliary principles of the moral faculty', which is the subject of the following chapter, supported this ambition. The principles of 'a regard to character', 'sense of the ridiculous', 'sympathy', and 'moral taste' illustrated the purpose and operations of a properly cultivated mind in 'real life' situations. According to Stewart, 'where they all maintain

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<sup>118</sup> Robert Gillies, *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran*, vol. one, (London: Richard Bentley 1851), 283.

their due place, in subordination to the moral faculty, they tend at once to fortify virtuous habits, and to recommend them, by the influence of amiable example, to the imitation of others'.<sup>119</sup> Whilst practical for securing refined manners in 'polite' society, the 'auxiliary principles' strengthened attachments to the branches of duty. Through reinforcing the innate obligations to God, others, and oneself, Stewart sought to encourage the practise of universal benevolence at a time when the counter-Enlightenment policies bred prejudices toward metaphysics and natural religion. For these reasons, Stewart remarked that 'at present, I must content myself with recommending it to the serious attention of moralists, as one of the most important topics of *practical ethics* which the actual circumstances of this part of the world point out as an object of philosophical discussion'.<sup>120</sup> As a product of Scottish Enlightenment thought and of 'Moderatism', Stewart's efforts to revive its ideals in response to powerful counter-Enlightenment interests 'exalted the character of his country and his generation'.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Stewart, *Active and Moral Powers*, 324.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Cockburn, *Memorials of His Time*, 26.

## Chapter Two

### **The Science of Applied Ethics in Scottish ‘Polite’ Society: Dugald Stewart on the ‘auxiliary principles of the moral faculty’**

In the decades surrounding the turn of the nineteenth century, Dugald Stewart encountered on-going opposition toward his support of ‘Moderate’ values and the teaching of metaphysics. This counter-Enlightenment movement emerged in response to the French Revolution, but its agenda threatened to eliminate the circumstances that had permitted the earlier rise of the Scottish Enlightenment. The censorship of free expression, in particular, greatly hindered Scottish creativity and scientific innovation that flourished in Scotland’s previous age of improvement. Stewart recognised that the survival of the ‘Moderate’ Enlightenment required addressing these new political, social, and intellectual challenges with a superior solution. This came in the form of his system of moral education. This task of sustaining the Scottish Enlightenment demanded that Stewart show how the cultivation of the mind and ‘Moderate’ beliefs directly benefited and were useful in modern ‘real life’ situations. As a central part of his system of moral education, Stewart’s treatment of applied ethics addressed this objective.

Examining Stewart’s contribution to applied ethics, the Scottish philosopher and historian James Mackintosh wrote that ‘few men ever lived, who poured into the breasts of youth a more fervid, and yet reasonable, love of liberty, of truth, and of virtue’.<sup>1</sup> In doing so, Stewart aimed at systematically exercising the mind as a way to foster an enlightened and benevolent society. His treatment of the ‘moral faculty’ and the branches of duty as ‘active and moral powers of the mind’ portrays how he sought to cultivate virtue through the activity of introspective reflection and the experience of sociable interaction. Stewart’s teaching of these innate powers offered a more nuanced and

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<sup>1</sup> James Mackintosh, *Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy: Chiefly during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*, (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1830), 213.

textured coverage than Reid had previously attempted. For example, Stewart suggested that the 'moral faculty' was assisted in its perfection by the exercise of other instinctive principles. He taught that 'in order to secure still more completely the good order of society, and to facilitate the acquisition of virtuous habits, nature has superadded to our moral constitution a variety of auxiliary principles, which sometimes give rise to a conduct agreeable to the rules of morality and highly useful to mankind'.<sup>2</sup> These 'auxiliary principles' consisted of 'regarding character', 'sensing the ridiculous', 'sympathy', and 'moral taste'. Each depended upon one another for their exercise toward perfection and, at the same time, drew heavily from elements of Scottish 'polite' culture as a central factor of their development. In treating these principles Stewart distanced himself in significant ways from earlier Scottish moralists such as Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith whilst building upon Reid's philosophical system in a new way. While Stewart's use of these principles represented an original part of his programme, they have received little attention. Their role in his system of moral education, their intended application in Scottish 'polite' culture, and how their exercise and application in society combated counter-Enlightenment interests is the focus of this chapter.

I shall first address the question of how Stewart appealed to the earlier 'Moderate' literati of Edinburgh's use of Scottish 'polite' culture. Then I shall discuss Stewart's role in Edinburgh's 'polite' culture as a member of philosophical and literary societies and how counter-Enlightenment policies hindered his pedagogical objectives in the public sphere. Finally, I shall turn to the question how, according to Stewart, the exercise of the 'auxiliary principles' developed virtuous sociability when applied in the contexts of

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<sup>2</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Outlines of Moral Philosophy*, second edition, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1801), 1:154. Since Stewart amended his early publications and lectures after receiving criticism from counter-Enlightenment factions, this chapter shall primarily reference the second editions of Stewart's *Elements* (1802) and *Outlines* (1801). This shows Stewart's continued resistance of counter-Enlightenment sentiments whilst guarding his programme from further controversy.

Scottish ‘polite’ culture. In the course of examining these areas, I argue that Stewart combined his applied ethics with the refinement of ‘polite’ manners as a way to undermine counter-Enlightenment policies and realise his vision of Enlightenment. By showing how the overlapping interests of social, ethical, and intellectual improvement as the practical intent of Stewart’s system of moral education, this chapter suggests his process of learning informed the creation of a new age of modernity.

### **Dugald Stewart and Scottish ‘polite’ culture**

During the long eighteenth-century, ‘polite’ manners and ‘sensibility’ were a prominent force in British culture.<sup>3</sup> Bernard Bailyn and John Clive have shown that eighteenth-century notions of ‘sensibility’ and ‘politeness’ in London received an enthusiastic reception across the provinces of the British Atlantic World.<sup>4</sup> As Roger Emerson and Nicholas Phillipson have argued, the Scottish Enlightenment (particularly its role in Edinburgh) also adopted a version of English ‘polite’ culture.<sup>5</sup> At this time the writings of early eighteenth-century British moralists (such as the third Earl of Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, and slightly later Adam Smith) situated morals within idioms of ‘polite’ culture.<sup>6</sup> This shared practise did not imply that moralists

<sup>3</sup> See G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783*, (OUP, 1989); John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> See John Clive and Bernard Bailyn, ‘England’s Cultural Provinces: Scotland and America’, *WMQ*, 11, (1954): 200-11. For further reading on the American reception of British ‘polite’ culture see David Shields, *Civil Tongues & Polite Letters in British America*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> See Roger Emerson, ‘Did the Scottish Enlightenment Take Place in an English Cultural Province?’, *Lumen*, 14, (1995): 1-24; ; Nicholas Phillipson, ‘Politics, Politeness and the Anglicisation of Early Eighteenth-Century Scottish Culture’, in *Scotland and England, 1286-1815*, edited by R. Mason, (EUP, 1987): 226-46.

<sup>6</sup> See Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1600-1800*, (London: Pearson, 2001), 46-72; John Hayman, ‘The Evolution of “The Moralists”’, *The Modern Language Review*, 64:4, (Oct., 1969): 728-733. Of these previous theorists, Shaftesbury had a significant impact on British

of this tradition followed the same philosophical approach or were in agreement of how best to develop virtue through sociability.<sup>7</sup> Yet Knud Haakonssen argues that the Scottish *literati* shared an interest in 'what sort of common good [could be] creat[ed] in human society'.<sup>8</sup> This focus led Scots to question the moral qualities of sociable interaction as an improving activity. Susan Manning and Thomas Ahnert have shown the Scottish moralists as linking empirical notions of identity and 'character' as ways to understand and foster sociability.<sup>9</sup> This pursuit took place in the institutional spheres of the Church and University as well as the conventional forums of philosophical and literary societies. Membership of these Scottish institutions affected how Scots interpreted and modified 'polite' sociability to the unique contexts in which they lived.<sup>10</sup> Manning and Ahnert argue:

During the 1760s and 1770s, the debate about sociability moved beyond academic moral philosophy, further into literature and into the periodical press, generating a coherent polite culture that would extend the reach of Scotland's philosophical Enlightenment from all-male clubs to mixed salons and into the domains of novels, sermons, historical works, polite essays, and legal discourse. This philosophical

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notions of 'politeness'. Lawrence Klein has shown that the earlier writings of Lord Shaftesbury constituted 'the moral self out of ineluctable sociability' of the inner voice (Lawrence Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: moral discourse and cultural politics in early eighteenth-century England*, (CUP, 1994), 89). Shaftesbury's theories on the moral struggle in developing virtuous sociability, however, did not account for the agent's will or the significance of the conscience understood by Stewart as the 'moral faculty'. Stewart later criticised that 'too little stress is laid on [the authority of conscience] by Lord Shaftesbury; and the omission is the chief defect of his philosophy' (Dugald Stewart, *The Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man*, vol. one, (Edinburgh: Adam Black, 1828), 158).

<sup>7</sup> See Christopher Berry, 'Sociality and socialisation', in *CCSE*, 243-257. For a more in-depth discussion of this subject see Christopher Berry, *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*, (EUP, 1997); John Dwyer, 'The imperative of sociability: Moral culture in the later Scottish Enlightenment', *British Journal of Eighteenth-Century Science*, 13:2, (1990): 169-84.

<sup>8</sup> Knud Haakonssen, 'Natural Law and Moral Realism: The Scottish Synthesis', in *Studies in Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, edited by M.A. Stewart, (OUP, 1991), 85.

<sup>9</sup> See Thomas Ahnert and Susan Manning (eds.), *Character, Self, and Sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment*, (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 2011), 1-26.

<sup>10</sup> See Nicholas Phillipson, 'Culture and Society in the Eighteenth-century Province: the Case of Edinburgh and the Scottish Enlightenment', in *The University in Society*, edited by L. Stone, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974): 407-48.

and literary world was also deeply entwined with religious and ecclesiastical affairs.<sup>11</sup>

The ‘Moderates’ of Edinburgh were centrally involved in Scotland’s development of ‘polite’ culture. As Edinburgh professors and ministers, the ‘Moderates’ harmonised the sociability of ‘polite’ culture with the Enlightenment ambition to improve the state of society. Richard Sher argues that their ‘chief objective was the production of well-rounded gentlemen, imbued with Christian humanist values and familiar with all branches of polite learning’.<sup>12</sup> In a significant sense the Moderates’ diffusion of these beliefs from the pulpit, University lecture halls, within the General Assembly, Edinburgh clubs and societies, and in print created what would later be known as the Scottish Enlightenment.

As the professor of rhetoric and belles-lettres at Edinburgh University (1759-1783) and minister of the High or New Kirk at St. Giles’s Church (1758-1800), Hugh Blair exemplified the ‘Moderate’ ideals of his contemporaries. Blair advocated that refinements of eloquence, ‘polite’ manners, and ‘polite taste’ were compatible with Calvinist principles as well as necessary practises for the improvement of society. He taught that ‘we refer to the sentiments of mankind in polished and flourishing nations; when arts are cultivated and manners refined; when works of genius are subjected to free discussion, and Taste is improved by Science and Philosophy’.<sup>13</sup> In doing so, he illustrated how the ‘Moderate’ values of free expression, ‘polite’ notions of ‘taste’ and Enlightenment science were central to the ‘Moderates’ understanding of an enlightened state of society. The popularity of Blair’s course amongst students and men of letters

<sup>11</sup> Manning and Ahnert (eds.), *Character, Self, and Sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment*, 9.

<sup>12</sup> Sher, *CU*, 29-30.

<sup>13</sup> Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1783), 42.

alike suggests that the upper and middling ranks of Edinburgh society actively sought the 'Moderates' version of 'polite' instruction. Blair remarked:

In an age when works of genius and literature are so frequently the subjects of discourse, when every one erects himself into a judge, and when we can hardly mingle in polite society without bearing some share in such discussions; studies of this kind, it is not to be doubted, will appear to derive part of their importance from the use to which they may be applied in furnishing materials for those fashionable topics of discourse, and thereby enabling us to support a proper rank in social life.<sup>14</sup>

His depiction of Edinburgh society denotes that the refinement of 'polite' manners and knowledge of literature and philosophy were necessary for success in public life.

Meanwhile, there was a sense that Edinburgh's 'polite' sophistication also responded to English criticisms of Scottish culture. Scottish men of letters were led to believe that Scotticisms, for example, blemished their attempts of 'polite' literature and 'sublime' oration as inferior to English standards.<sup>15</sup> In the words of Dugald Stewart 'the Scotch accent is surely in itself as good as the English; and with a few exceptions, is as agreeable to the ear: and yet how offensive does it appear, even to us, who have been accustomed to hear it from our infancy, when compared with that which is used by our southern neighbours!'<sup>16</sup> Blair and his 'Moderate' contemporaries sought to remove this stigma whilst modifying 'polite' culture toward their ideas of moral and religious improvement. While the Church had a traditional investment in the moral improvement of society, the 'Moderates' redefined the content and pathway of this end purpose. Ahnert argues:

Blair's sermons were indeed intended for moral edification of their audience and readers, but they were more than a kind of "Calvinism lite," a watered-down version of traditional theological beliefs, packaged as pleasing moral precepts for polite and fashionable audiences. Rather, their moral purpose reflected a very specific

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

<sup>15</sup> See James Basker, 'Scotticisms and the Problem of Cultural Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, edited by Dwyer and Sher, (EUP, 1993), 81-9.

<sup>16</sup> Stewart, *Elements*, 368. See Emanuele Levi Mortera, 'Dugald Stewart's Theory of Language and Philosophy of Mind', *Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, 1:1, (March 2003): 35-56.



theological outlook that distinguished Blair and other Moderates from their more orthodox Calvinist critics, such as the clergymen John Witherspoon.<sup>17</sup>

Blair (as Ahnert argues) entwined Calvinist principles with ‘polite’ discourse and morals whilst maintaining Scripture as the primary source of moral conduct. Blair’s ‘Moderate’ contemporaries largely upheld this belief. The Moderates’ endorsement of Scottish ‘polite’ culture went beyond their role in the Church and the University to include British print culture and literary and philosophical societies. The range of literary topics discussed at these social gatherings demonstrated their ‘commitment to such polite, enlightened values as genteel manners’.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the political overtones and shared ideological beliefs expressed within these societies (such as the ‘Select Society’) offer an explanation of how the ‘Moderates’ as so-called ‘polite’ philosophers understood ‘politeness’.<sup>19</sup> Ahnert suggests that ‘a “polite” philosopher was one who allowed himself to be guided by the fashionable, refined passions or sentiments typical of his age’.<sup>20</sup> According to Kathleen Holcomb, this union of ‘polite’ interests and sophisticated philosophical and literary debate within the contexts of clubs and societies created a distinctive feature of the Scottish Enlightenment.<sup>21</sup> Did this culture survive the counter-Enlightenment censorship of the public sphere in the years that followed the French

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Ahnert, ‘The Moral Education of Mankind: Character and Religious Moderatism in the Sermons of Hugh Blair’, in *Character, Self, and Sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment*, 68.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Sher, *The Enlightenment & the Book: Scottish Authors & their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland & America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 67.

<sup>19</sup> See Nicholas Phillipson, ‘Culture and Society in the Eighteenth-century Province: the Case of Edinburgh and the Scottish Enlightenment’, in L. Stone (ed.), *The University in Society*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 407-48; Idem, ‘Politics, Politeness and the Anglicisation of Early Eighteenth-Century Scottish Culture’, *Scotland and England, 1286-1815*, edited by Mason, (EUP, 1987), 226-46; Roger Emerson, ‘The Social Composition of Enlightened Scotland: the “Select Society of Edinburgh”, 1754-1764’, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 114, (1973): 291-330.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Ahnert, ‘Clergymen as Polite Philosophers: Douglas and the Conflict between Moderates and Orthodox in the Scottish Enlightenment’, *Intellectual History Review*, 18:3, (2008): 383.

<sup>21</sup> Kathleen Holcomb, ‘A Dance in the Mind: the Provincial Scottish Philosophical Societies’, *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 21, (1991): 89-100.

Revolution? Moreover, did Dugald Stewart's system of moral education strictly follow the 'Moderates' use of 'polite' culture in his response to counter-Enlightenment interests?

Dugald Stewart had been one of Blair's students, and his particular use of 'polite' idioms in his programme of moral education certainly appealed to 'Moderate' examples as well as the writings of George Campbell who defended Reid's philosophy.<sup>22</sup> Blair's belief that the faculty of 'reason would be a solitary, and, in some measure, an unavailable principle' without the cultivated abilities of communication had a profound impact on Stewart's applied ethics.<sup>23</sup> Contrary to Stewart's defence of instinctive principles of the mind, Blair believed (as Ahnert argues) moral improvement heavily relied upon revealed religion.<sup>24</sup> This belief was communicated in both his lectures and sermons. Celebrated as 'one of the greatest didactic orators', Stewart's applied ethics reflected a different pedagogical purpose than what Blair and Reid sought to achieve from the classroom.<sup>25</sup> While Reid's lectures conveyed the import of his philosophical system without embellishing the performance of its transmission, Stewart, on the other hand, believed that an eloquent delivery of morals greatly assisted in its adoption. Stewart reminisced that 'in [Reid's] elocution and mode of instruction, there was nothing peculiarly attractive...he seldom, if ever, indulged himself in the warmth of extempore discourse; nor was his manner of reading calculated to increase the effect of what he had

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<sup>22</sup> Stewart attended Blair's course twice between 1768 and 1771. Despite the circulation of Priestley's objections, George Campbell drew from Reid's philosophical system and use of the term 'Common Sense' (George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1776), n110). Stewart wrote 'I mentioned Dr. Campbell, as an ingenious defender of the system of the Nominalists; and alluded to a particular application which he made of their doctrine...but the disquisitions to which [chapter seven of *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*] is prefixed, contains many acute and profound remarks on the nature and power of signs, both as a medium of communication, and as an instrument of thought' (Stewart, *Elements*, 196-7).

<sup>23</sup> Blair, *Lectures*, 9.

<sup>24</sup> Ahnert, 'The Moral Education of Mankind: Character and Religious Moderatism in the Sermons of Hugh Blair', 82.

<sup>25</sup> Cockburn, *Memorials of His Time*, 26. For further examples of Stewart's reception by Scottish Whigs see Clive, *Scotch Reviewers*, 108.

committed to writing'.<sup>26</sup> Similar to the object of his publications, Reid's lectures ridiculed the 'Ideal Theory' as a way to vindicate his 'principles of common sense'. By accepting Reidian principles as true, Stewart had more space than Reid to discuss the application of applied ethics in society. In doing so, Stewart's lecturing style provided an example for his audience of the eloquence and ethics that could be achieved through the exercise of his system. As an earlier student, Henry Cockburn wrote:

To me his lectures were like the opening of the heavens. I felt that I had a soul. His noble views, unfolded in glorious sentences, elevated me into a higher world. I was as much excited and charmed as any man of cultivated taste would be...had he lived in ancient times, his memory would have descended to us as that of one of the finest of the old eloquent sages.<sup>27</sup>

James Mill commented that 'I have heard Pitt and Fox deliver some of their most admired speeches, but I have never heard anything so eloquent as some of the lectures of Professor Stewart'.<sup>28</sup> Unsurprisingly given Cockburn's and Mill's reverent remarks, Stewart's reputation as a moralist was inextricably linked to his eloquence as a pedagogue.<sup>29</sup> How Stewart explained and composed his ideas, which were meant to primarily instruct, contributed to his impact in diffusing Scottish philosophy; his purpose in creating a system of moral education and its application in Scottish 'polite' culture, however, deserves further examination.

While Blair's lectures primarily attended to 'polite' manners as human constructions with deep philosophical and religious undertones, Stewart's programme was concerned with exercising universal and timeless principles of the mind as a way to

<sup>26</sup> Stewart, *Account of Thomas Reid*, in *Biographical Memoirs*, 264.

<sup>27</sup> Cockburn, *Memorials*, 26.

<sup>28</sup> James Mill to Macvey Napier, 10 July 1831, quoted in Macvey Napier (ed.), *Selection from the Correspondence of the late Macvey Napier*, (London: Macmillan, 1879).

<sup>29</sup> In suggesting that Stewart's 'pure and lively' style served as a model for excellent writing, Francis Horner went so far as to claim that 'I do not know any one English author in this line of writing who can be mentioned as a model' (Francis Horner, *Memoirs of Francis Horner: with selections from his correspondence*, (Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers, 1849), 257).

cultivate benevolence, Enlightenment, and civil manners (most notably through the exercise of the 'moral faculty').<sup>30</sup> He cautioned that fluctuating 'polite' fashions could impede benevolence in society by masking sincere intentions of agents and detract from universal attachments to humanity. Moreover, he thought that 'polite' manners and 'polite taste' sometimes led to prejudicial impressions of foreign cultures as inferior particularly during periods of political distress. Elements of British cultural intolerance of this sort were heightened in the years that followed the French Revolution. National prejudices toward foreign cultural beliefs undermined Stewart's conviction that everyone shared universal connections through the divinely inspired faculties of the mind and as participants in the universal human experience. From its allegedly divisive consequences to universal benevolence, Stewart taught that cultural prejudices obstructed the progress of human reason and ethics. According to Stewart, 'there are two classes of men who have more particularly been charged with this weakness; those who are placed at the bottom, and those who have reached the summit of the scale of refinement; the former from ignorance, and the latter from national vanity'.<sup>31</sup> As shown in the previous chapter, the circulation of radical philosophical writings in the years that followed the French Revolution convinced Stewart of the moral and social imperative to educate the lower ranks in society.<sup>32</sup> Stewart's inclusion of British gentlemen, who were often influential in politics, as equally prejudicial to universal benevolence certainly targeted the Henry Dundas interests of the counter-Enlightenment. Edinburgh Whigs at the time also held

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<sup>30</sup> Blair taught that 'polite is a term more commonly applied to manners or behaviour, than to the mind or imagination' (Blair, *Lectures*, 223). For further reading on Blair's use of philosophy see Vincent Bevilacqua, 'Philosophical Assumptions underlying Hugh Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres', *Western Speech*, 31, (1967): 150-156.

<sup>31</sup> Stewart, *Elements*, 351.

<sup>32</sup> See chapter one, 51-70. Dugald Stewart, *Lectures on Political Economy, to which is prefixed, part third of the Outlines of Moral Philosophy*, edited by Sir William Hamilton, volume two, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1877), 94.

pejorative views toward other cultures but these Whig beliefs, for Stewart, did not impede 'justice' to the degree that the Dundas led Scottish Seditious Trials had shown. Stewart's teaching of this belief appealed to Blair's earlier attention to distortions of language in securing power over others.<sup>33</sup> According to Donald Winch, Stewart's response to counter-Enlightenment policies 'was to rely upon the diffusion of enlightened opinion as a substitute for public virtue; it was valuable precisely because of its self-fulfilling properties: belief in it enjoined "patriotic exertion" on behalf of the common good'.<sup>34</sup> Stewart's appeal to 'Moderate' values, as his prescribed source of 'enlightened opinion', was indeed a prominent feature of his system of moral education, but were these beliefs on their own meant to revive or substitute the supposed decline in public virtue? His fostering of a new generation of virtuous men (whose sense of 'right and wrong' derived from the 'moral faculty' not the constructions of 'polite' fashion) redefined the role of patriotism in various states of society with Enlightenment as its most advanced stage.

Stewart's belief that counter-Enlightenment policies threatened his system of moral education was inextricably linked to conflicting notions and exertions of patriotism. While his Whiggish political opinions factored into this belief, Stewart, like the earlier 'Moderates', sought to improve the human condition in society toward their type of Enlightenment. His discussion on the progressive stages of patriotism advanced this ambition with a particular attention to the influences of reason, experience and

<sup>33</sup> As Susan Manly has shown, 'Blair's interest in language stems from his conviction that an improvement in style will have wide social consequences, and his awareness that the abuse of power has frequently been founded on the manipulation of language' (Susan Manly, *Language, Custom and Nation in the 1790s: Locke, Tooke, Wordsworth, Edgeworth*, (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), 134). Discussions of power were not peculiar to enlightened sociability or rhetoric, but Blair's belief that eloquence necessarily required morals suggested that 'sublime sentiments' derived from 'certain affections' to humanity were best understood from virtuous men (Blair, *Lectures*, 66).

<sup>34</sup> Donald Winch, 'The System of the North: Dugald Stewart and his pupils', in *That Noble Science of Politics: A study of nineteenth-century intellectual history*, edited by Stefan Collini, Donald Winch, and John Burrow, (CUP, 1983), 43.

education.<sup>35</sup> As part of the 'imagination' as an 'intellectual power of the mind', Stewart identified that 'instinctive patriotism [had] no connection with our moral or natural powers [and] they imply neither reflection nor a sense of duty'.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, he considered that membership of a community bred a natural inclination for its promotion and security. Stewart suggested that as a society became more advanced 'instinctive patriotism' decayed from reasonable reflection and was replaced with a 'rational patriotism' that restrained prejudices from infecting a society's political policies. Stewart's proposed transition from 'instinctive patriotism' toward the more advanced practise of 'rational patriotism' was certainly relevant to Edinburgh politics and the wider British public discourse during the 1790s. Furthermore, his encouragement of 'rational patriotism' sheds new light on what he hoped to achieve in his system of moral education. Through his lectures, publications, and membership of literary and philosophical societies, Stewart encouraged 'rational patriotism' as it applied in both private and 'polite' forums.

In the years following his 1772 return to Edinburgh, Stewart joined the 'Moderates' at literary and philosophical societies. He was, for example, a member of the 'Speculative Society', Freemasons, Philosophical Society (which became the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1783), 'Oyster Club', 'Poker Club' (a short-lived attempt to revive this previously disbanded club took place in 1786), and the 'Friday Club'.<sup>37</sup> Within the 'Speculative Society', Stewart debated the consequences of 'instinctive patriotism' on universal benevolence amongst a diverse group of Whig and politically conservative

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<sup>35</sup> See Rosalind Mitchison, 'Patriotism and National Identity in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', in *Nationality and the Pursuit of National Independence*, edited by T.W. Moody, (London: Appletree Press Ltd., 1978), 73-95; Nicholas Phillipson, 'Nationalism and the Ideology', in *Government and Nationalism in Scotland*, edited by Wolfe, (EUP, 1969), 167-188.

<sup>36</sup> See Stewart, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, taken by James Bridges, Winter 1801-1802, EUL MS Dc.5.88, third part.

<sup>37</sup> See MacIntyre, *Dugald Stewart*, 121-130.

University students. While members of this society who met every Tuesday evening also discussed a range of ‘polite’ subjects such as poetry and literature, the politically and ideologically charged debates defied the censorship policies of the counter-Enlightenment. Henry Dundas and George Hill’s new Moderate party certainly found offence in Stewart’s proposed discussions: ‘Is a religious establishment advantageous to a community?’ ‘Should representatives in Parliament consider themselves bound to follow the instructions of their Constituents?’ ‘Would the diffusion of knowledge amongst the lower ranks be attended with advantage to the Community?’ ‘Can any circumstances justify the suspension of Habeas Corpus?’<sup>38</sup> These deliberately pointed topics for discussion on religious and secular governmental authority questioned counter-Enlightenment interests of censoring political and philosophical discourse in the public sphere. In reference to these particular debates, Henry Cockburn wrote that ‘the political sensitiveness of the day at one time obtruded itself rather violently into this hall of philosophical orators...while it lasted, it only animated their debates, and, by connecting them with public principles and parties, gave a practical interest to their proceedings’.<sup>39</sup> Stewart’s willingness to challenge the counter-Enlightenment in public forums from his convictions of ‘right and wrong’ and of ‘justice’ coincided with his purpose in teaching the exercise of the ‘moral faculty’ as the best means to combat the intellectual and moral repression of the counter-Enlightenment. Yet his mingling of philosophy, politics, and ‘Moderate’ ideology extended to other practical uses in the contexts of Scottish ‘polite’ culture.

<sup>38</sup> Stewart’s list of questions to discuss in a Speculative Society’s meeting was undated but probably appeared between 1794 and 1802. University of Edinburgh Special Collections, Dugald Stewart Collection 505, Ds.6.111, MS 35480.

<sup>39</sup> Cockburn, *Life of Lord Jeffrey*, 47-8.



**Fostering Virtuous Habits: Stewart on 'auxiliary principles of the moral faculty'**

At a time when counter-Enlightenment policies limited free expression in the public sphere, Stewart continued the earlier Moderates' use of 'polite' culture and their commitment to social improvement. By teaching practical methods for fostering virtuous habits in 'real life' situations, Stewart prepared young men to flourish in public life.<sup>40</sup> Stewart's programme did not entirely conform to how the earlier 'Moderates' of Edinburgh achieved this task. The principal difference was his emphasis of perfecting the principles of the mind as the best way to navigate and thrive within 'polite' culture. Through the exercise of the 'moral faculty' (in addition to fulfilling the instinctive branches of duty) agents gradually developed virtuous sociability whilst improving 'polite' manners. Stewart suggested that other principles assisted the 'moral faculty' in achieving this objective. He wrote:

An attention to the moral faculty alone, without regard to the principles which were intended to operate as its auxiliaries, and which contribute, in fact, so powerfully to the good order of society, has led a few Philosophers into an opposite extreme;--less dangerous, undoubtedly, in its practical tendency, but less calculated, perhaps, to recommend ethical disquisitions to the notice of those who are engrossed with active concerns of life.<sup>41</sup>

Stewart's teaching of the 'auxiliary principles' demonstrated how applied ethics improved virtuous sociability and, in turn, encouraged the practise of universal benevolence and modernity. Rather than influencing society through delineating fashionable rules of 'polite' conduct,<sup>42</sup> Stewart taught ways to exercise the principles of

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<sup>40</sup> See Nicholas Phillipson, 'The pursuit of virtue in Scottish university education: Dugald Stewart and Scottish moral philosophy in the Enlightenment', *Universities, Society and the Future*, edited by Idem, (EUP, 1983), 82-101; Richard Sher, 'Professors of Virtue: The Social History of the Edinburgh Moral Philosophy Chair in the Eighteenth Century', in *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, edited by M.A. Stewart, (OUP, 1991), 87-126.

<sup>41</sup> Stewart, *Active and Moral Powers*, 325.

<sup>42</sup> Throughout the eighteenth century the British interest in 'polite' instruction mingled politics and morals. This appeared in a number of publications most notably London's *Gentleman's Magazine* (whose earlier contributors had included Samuel Johnson) and the *Spectator*. For coverage of the early eighteenth-century uses of 'politeness' see Nicholas Phillipson, 'Politics and Politeness in the Reigns of Anne and the Early Hanoverians', in *The Varieties of British Political Thought*, edited by J.G.A.



the mind through sociable exchanges. Although the principles of ‘sensing decency’, ‘sensing the ridiculous’, ‘sympathy’, and ‘moral taste’ overlapped in many respects, they each offered distinct ways to perfect an agent’s ethical disposition whilst justifying the social application of Stewart’s system of moral education.

### **Sensing Decent Conduct: Stewart on ‘a regard to character’**

The philosophical theme of ‘character’ received rich treatment in Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy. Scottish moral discussions of ‘character’ often revolved around aspects of sociality.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, treatment of ‘national character’, ‘moral character’, and ‘intellectual character’ offered more precise definitions of specific kinds of ‘character’. As Jennifer Tannoch-Bland has shown, Stewart illustrated reasons for the variations of ‘intellectual character’ and its proper exercise with a particular objective of justifying the use of the science of mind in the improvement of man.<sup>44</sup> He taught that ‘the varieties of intellectual character among men, result from the various possible combinations and modifications of faculties, which, in greater or less degrees, are common to the whole species’.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, Stewart taught that the perfectibility of the different types of ‘character’ could be achieved in properly applying his moral system. He argued that ‘there can be no doubt that the study of the mind improves us in every aspect [and] particularly prepares us for the more successful application to common

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Pocock, (CUP, 1993), 211-245. Lord Chesterfield’s letters to his son were an excellent example of the eighteenth-century British enthusiasm of ‘polite’ instruction manuals. See David Roberts (ed.), *Lord Chesterfield’s Letters*, (OUP, 2008).

<sup>43</sup> See Manning and Ahnert (eds.), *Character, Self, and Sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment*, 1-26.

<sup>44</sup> See Jennifer Tannoch-Bland, ‘Dugald Stewart on intellectual character’, *British Journal for the History of Science*, 30:3, (1997): 307-320.

<sup>45</sup> Stewart, *Outlines*, 1:61.

concerns of life'.<sup>46</sup> His system of moral education, therefore, offered ways to cultivate an enlightened 'intellectual character' as well as other types of 'character'.

In the context of Stewart's exchanges with Francis Jeffrey over the merit of teaching metaphysics, Tannoch-Bland suggests that Stewart's attention to the methodology of moral philosophy furthered reasons why metaphysics should be treated as an experimental science and, if properly examined, had authority over other branches of knowledge.<sup>47</sup> Supporting a view on the primacy of the mind, Stewart taught that 'all sciences concenter [sic] in that of the philosophy of the mind...for the principles of them all are situated in it...all knowledge therefore of Morals, is the only solid foundation of a thorough skill in the sciences of Logic, Politic, grammar, & etcetera'.<sup>48</sup> As was often the case in Stewart's writings and lectures, he linked mental faculties and their operations to corresponding roles in morals. Consistent with this practise, Stewart believed that agents who properly developed 'intellectual character' often possessed 'moral character'.<sup>49</sup> While 'intellectual character' was shown through the originality of thought and the 'magnificence' of its contribution, 'moral character' was closely aligned to a cultivated 'moral faculty'.<sup>50</sup> By maintaining that metaphysicians best served the instruction and advancement of knowledge, Stewart delineated how pursuits in this field revealed moral qualities and powers commonly observed yet not always properly understood or exercised. His treatment of the principle 'decency or a regard to character' illustrated how

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<sup>46</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Lectures on moral philosophy, 1806-1807*, taken by John Borthwick, EUL Gen. 843, 21.

<sup>47</sup> See Jennifer Tannoch-Bland, *The Primacy of Moral Philosophy: Dugald Stewart and the Scottish Enlightenment*, unpublished PhD thesis, Griffith University, 2000, 117-189.

<sup>48</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy, 1806-1807*, taken by John Borthwick, EUL, Gen. 843, 9-10.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Tannoch-Bland, 'Dugald Stewart on Intellectual Character', 310.

the mind actively sensed refinements and deficiencies in ‘moral and intellectual character’ and its value to civil and ‘polite’ society.

Stewart’s system, particularly in treating the ‘auxiliary principles’, informed the creation of a new notion of modernity within Scottish moral philosophy and ‘polite’ culture. In doing so, he harmonised Enlightenment science (based on Reid’s philosophy), ‘Moderate’ values, and the social concerns of a new age wrought with political, ideological and intellectual tensions. The functions of the ‘auxiliary principles’ that Stewart endorsed departed from David Hume’s and Adam Smith’s earlier treatment of ‘character’, ‘moral judgment’ and the origin of morals whilst expanding upon Reid’s applied ethics.<sup>51</sup> Contrary to Hume’s theory, Stewart taught that moral judgments, largely informed by ‘auxiliary principles’, examined the purpose of a particular action and the disposition of the agent. Stewart’s programme of moral education, therefore, emphasised the intentions and causes of human agency of action and relation of a particular action to virtue and vice. The principle of ‘decency or a regard to character’ judged ‘moral and intellectual character’ based on the ethical disposition of the agent. In practise, the active and moral power to distinguish performances of ‘polite’ manners that emulated perceived virtues out of self-interest from actions of ‘moral character’ proved useful in navigating a complex ‘polite’ society. According to Stewart, ‘where a rational and settled Benevolence forms a part of a character, it will render the conduct perfectly uniform, and will exclude the possibility of those inconsistencies that are frequently observable in individuals, who give themselves up to the guidance of particular affections, whether private or public’.<sup>52</sup>

‘Regarding character’ was vital in determining various moral qualities in performances of

<sup>51</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of Reid’s and Hume’s treatment of ‘character’ see James Harris, ‘Reid and Hume on the Possibility of Character’, in *Character, Self, and Sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment*, 31-45.

<sup>52</sup> Stewart, *Outlines*, 3:251.

civility, kindness, humanity, patriotism, and universal benevolence. Meanwhile, an agent's ethical disposition affected others as a member of society and, by extension, influenced the moral welfare of that society. In this respect, Stewart's purpose in treating this principle certainly surpassed the interests of individual agents.

The function of 'a regard to character' hinged on the belief that virtuous sociability stemmed from the 'moral faculty' not a prudent regard for self-interest or the utility of virtuous conduct. Stewart considered three reasons why the practise of this principle was independent of social motivations or self-interest. First, people with cultivated 'character' could sense insincere acts of civility or gestures of kindness. These artificial acts would not garner the approval of enlightened agents and would consequently be regarded as 'ridiculous'. Second, virtuous actions are most appreciated and valued by others when the agent was unaware of its approval. Yet again a 'regard of character' naturally acted from the best interests of others without the motivations of rewards or public approval. Finally, if an agent's regard to public opinion surpasses his innate sense of moral duty then the agent would be filled with self-condemnation, 'whereas a steady adherence to the Right never fails to be its own reward, even when it exposes us to calumny and misrepresentation'.<sup>53</sup> Since the branches of moral duty that supported the exercise of 'moral character' and 'intellectual character' sometimes conflicted with social norms (or in Stewart's experience the counter-Enlightenment policies of the Dundas interest), a steadfast commitment to improving 'moral and intellectual character' pursued virtuous conduct rather than public esteem. For Stewart, the cultivation of this principle strengthened the pursuit of virtue and safeguarded his students from adopting morally corrupt fashions or policies.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 1:157.

Stewart's conviction that exercising the moral powers of the mind gradually fostered an enlightened and benevolent society did not imply that he believed Edinburgh had already achieved this ideal in the earlier age of 'Moderatism'. From the interest of practical knowledge, his programme of moral education suggested that at a young age public regard and 'all those rules of conduct which profess to out the proper ends of human pursuit [such as literature or poetry], and the most effectual means of attaining them' were useful in early moral development.<sup>54</sup> Since the perfection of the mind required a lifetime of continuous exercise, a regard to public opinion greatly assisted in forming early associations as part of this gradual development. Stewart remarked:

There can be no doubt that a regard to the good opinion of our fellow-creatures has great influence in promoting our exertions to cultivate both the one and the other, [and] the effect which this principle has in strengthening our virtuous habits, and in restraining those passions which a sense of duty alone would not be sufficient to regulate.<sup>55</sup>

Despite not qualifying as virtuous, esteem for public approbation assisted 'by training us early to exertions of self-command and self-denial' as a useful tool in early education.<sup>56</sup>

Whilst practical at young ages when the 'moral faculty' was unrefined, Stewart stipulated that mature minds pursued the attainment of 'moral character' from imposed moral obligations to God, others, and themselves. Closely affiliated with 'a regard to character', the principle of 'a sense of the ridiculous' identified trivial and in certain circumstances more nefarious attempts to emulate virtuous conduct. In cases when these improperly directed activities fell short in their intended execution, he suggested they should be considered as 'ridiculous' from not only unfavourable public reactions but also because of its destructive effects on benevolence in society.

<sup>54</sup> Stewart, *Active and Moral Powers*, 234.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 307.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

### **Not Quite Immoral: Stewart on the 'sense of the ridiculous'**

In the congress of 'polite' interactions, unsuccessful attempts at refined manners or social awkwardness occurred frequently enough to merit space in Stewart's system. For Stewart, the exercise of the principle of 'sensing ridiculous behaviour' assisted in identifying social and moral shortcomings. As a lesser degree of immorality or impropriety in particular social situations, Stewart remarked 'that nothing is ridiculous but what falls short, some way or other, of our ideas of excellence'.<sup>57</sup> Contrary to subjective notions of 'polite' manners that fluctuated with passing fashions, Stewart's idea of intellectual and moral excellence was timeless in referring to the perfection of the mind where agents possessed cultivated 'moral and intellectual characters'. Yet ridiculous behaviour enveloped both failures in 'moral character' and 'polite' manners. He taught that 'the natural and proper object of Ridicule, is those smaller improprieties in character and manners which do not rouse our feeling of moral indignation, nor impress us with a melancholy view of human depravity'.<sup>58</sup> Ridiculous behaviour was offensive to virtue insofar as it distracted and, in certain circumstances, derailed pursuits of virtuous sociability. For example, the spectacles of inappropriate manners or inebriation created scenes of 'ridiculousness' rendering virtuous sociability impossible for those unprepared to properly respond to such displays.

From its potential to entertain, Stewart suggested that ridiculous behaviour should be observed with extra caution for as he noted this principle often detracted from the pursuit of virtue as well as its potential to corrupt. Despite these possible consequences, ridiculous acts served enlightened educated men as examples of how not to behave. According to Stewart, 'while this part of our constitution enlarges the fund of our

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 318.

<sup>58</sup> Stewart, *Outlines*, 2:160.

enjoyment, by rendering the more trifling imperfections of our fellow-creatures a source of amusement to their neighbors, it excites the exertions of every individual to correct those imperfections by which the ridicule of others is likely to be provoked'.<sup>59</sup> Although receiving enjoyment from ridiculous acts at the expense of others was vicious, sensing the erroneous purpose behind ridiculous behaviour and the disposition of the actor revealed possible deficient areas in 'character' that the observer could correct in his or her behaviour through introspective reflection and future sociable interactions. This corrective process was not merely a means to avoid ridiculous behaviour. It reaffirmed the agents' duty to furnish examples of virtuous sociability as a way to improve the moral experience of others. Sensing ridiculous conduct, therefore, strengthened an agent's instinctive obligation to the moral improvement of his neighbors that derived from the 'moral faculty'.

Meanwhile, the 'sense of the ridiculous' shed light on the follies of an improperly regulated education. Yet interpreting proper responses to ridiculous behaviour was complicated by the diverse ways in which it appeared. In more pernicious forms, ridiculous behaviour did not incite amusement but rather deceived the public. For Stewart, the concealment of intellectual and ethical deficiencies with veils of affection, hypocrisy, vanity, and pride were particularly contemptible. According to Stewart, those born into privilege were 'liable to be perverted by education and fashion' and knew how to mask their ethical and intellectual shortcomings.<sup>60</sup> This too had a bearing on Stewart's on-going tension with the counter-Enlightenment policies. For instance, Stewart's warning against imbalances of power reflected his Whiggish disdain for Henry Dundas and underpinned his interests in public welfare by ridiculing what he saw as contrary

<sup>59</sup> Stewart, *Active and Moral Powers*, 318.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

conservative policies. In doing so, Stewart certainly targeted the Scottish Seditious Trials in claiming that 'the legislator has it more in his power to influence national manners, than by watching over those public exhibitions which avail themselves of this principle of human nature'.<sup>61</sup> Counter-Enlightenment policies could be seen as 'ridiculous' insofar as they proposed to protect British liberties by suspending the primary source of those liberties, namely Habeas Corpus and relatively free expression. Furthermore, Stewart argued that properly educated agents recognised these counter-Enlightenment policies as conflicting to the universal 'moral laws' and the branches of duty. He suggested:

This is surely the language of *nature*; and which could not fail to occur to every man capable of serious thought, were not the understanding and the moral feelings in some instances miserably perverted by religious and political prejudices, and in others by the false refinements of metaphysical theories.<sup>62</sup>

While the principles of 'a regard to character' and 'sensing ridiculous behaviour' improved the development of moral judgments whilst supporting the exercise of the 'moral faculty', Stewart's belief in humanity's natural inclination toward benevolence was best shown in treating the principle of 'sympathy'.

### **'Grafted on Benevolence': Stewart on 'sympathy'**

The philosophical theme of 'sympathy' attracted a range of opinions amongst eighteenth-century Scottish philosophers. Often overlapping with modern notions of empathy, a comprehensive analysis of discussions of 'sympathy' would far exceed the scope of this chapter; a brief review of how earlier Scottish theorists treated this theme, however, will help to clarify this part of Stewart's thought and its place in his system of moral education. Given its prominence in seminal Scottish philosophical works, Stewart's treatment of 'sympathy' as an 'auxiliary principle of the moral faculty' must be

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 320.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 330.



examined in relation to the earlier writings of David Hume, Adam Smith, and Thomas Reid.<sup>63</sup> As Knud Haakonssen has shown, ‘Hume had begun and Smith continued the speculation that the only basis in human nature for moral judgements is provided by a set of simple emotional responses in others through sympathy’.<sup>64</sup> For Hume and Smith, the shared moral judgments among a collective group that consisted of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour explained how individuals practised virtues from affections and, at the same time, offered a reason for the formation of societies. As an ‘impartial observer’ of human nature and historian, Smith suggested that moralists could trace this development over time through the stages of societal development.<sup>65</sup> Similar to Hume’s notion that ‘sympathy’ functioned as communication between agents, Smith added that agents could imagine passions that were not observed or present in another agent.<sup>66</sup> The operation of imagining how an unobserved agent would feel in a particular situation and the fact that agents found virtue pleasurable because of its utility marked a key difference between Smith and Hume. Smith wrote that in judging others ‘our sentiments of this kind have always some secret reference either to what are, or to what we imagine ought to be the sentiments of others [and] we examine it as we imagine an impartial spectator would examine it’.<sup>67</sup> Alexander Broadie has shown that Thomas Reid criticised Smith’s moral

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<sup>63</sup> Distinct from the moral power of ‘sympathy’, Stewart taught that the physical body instinctively sympathised with others through the use of ‘imagination’ and bodily responses to the actions of others. Stewart characterised these reflexive responses to ‘contagious’ transfers of yawning or stammering as ‘hysterical’ (Stewart, *Outlines*, 2:158).

<sup>64</sup> Knud Haakonssen, *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy: From Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment*, (CUP, 1996), 231.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> See Rico Vitz, ‘Sympathy and Benevolence in Hume’s Moral Psychology’, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 42, (2004): 261-275.

<sup>67</sup> Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, (Edinburgh, 1759), 198. Stewart also accounted for the role of imagination in ‘sympathy’. In imagined situations, agents’ sympathised how particular physical situations felt for others. For example, Stewart wrote that ‘in looking upward to a precipice, if one of our fellow-creatures, or even one of the lower animals, should be placed on the brink, the principle of sympathy transports us instantly, in imagination, to the critical spot; exciting in us some

theory as 'selfish' for his belief that the 'impartial spectator' imagined how he or she would feel in an imagined situation rather than how the observed agent felt.<sup>68</sup> Contrary to Smith, Reid remarked that 'it appears to be impossible that there can be sympathy without benevolent affection'.<sup>69</sup> For Reid, considering the feelings of those where benevolent affections were not present involved pity not 'sympathy'. Like Smith's previous expansion of Hume's treatment of 'sympathy', Stewart's writings built upon Reid's earlier ideas with interesting adaptations. Whilst Stewart and Reid agreed that the origin of applied ethics derived from the 'moral faculty', Stewart expanded upon this concept by saying that 'sympathy' as an 'auxiliary principle' strengthened benevolent attachments and improved moral judgments. Reid did not, however, provide an in-depth explanation of how 'sympathy' as a 'moral power of the mind' functioned in this way. Stewart filled this gap in Reid's applied ethics. In addition to 'obtaining a fair and just view of the circumstances', Stewart believed 'there is an exquisite pleasure annexed to the sympathy or fellow-feeling of other men, with our joys and sorrows, and even with our opinions, tastes and humours, is a fact obvious to vulgar observation'.<sup>70</sup> His encouragement of these natural bonds within society also included other exercises that he believed improved 'national character' and 'moral character'. This too appealed to Reid's earlier thought.

Similar to Reid's style of vindicating his ideas through ridiculing theorists associated with the 'Ideal Theory', Stewart advanced his ideas on 'sympathy' against

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degree of the same feeling which we should there have experienced' (Dugald Stewart, *Philosophical Essays*, (Edinburgh: George Ramsay and Co., 1810), 353).

<sup>68</sup> Alexander Broadie, 'Sympathy and the Impartial Spectator', in *The Cambridge Companion to Adam Smith*, edited by Haakonssen, (CUP, 2006), 163.

<sup>69</sup> Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, (Edinburgh: John Bell, 1788), 163.

<sup>70</sup> Stewart, *Active and Moral Powers*, 308.

Smith's treatment of moral sentiments.<sup>71</sup> In doing so, Stewart identified two areas of Smith's moral thought as particularly problematic: the concept that 'sympathy' was the origin of moral sentiments and the extent of its practise in sociable interactions.

According to Stewart, 'it may be objected to Mr. Smith's theory, that it confounds the *means* or *expedients* by which nature enables us to correct our moral judgements, with the principles in our constitution to which our moral judgements owe their origin'.<sup>72</sup> Despite praising Smith's attempt to shed new light on applied ethics in 'real life' situations, Stewart sought to correct Smith's supposed errors without sacrificing the practical application of this science in social and pedagogical contexts.

In treating the origin of ethics, Smith reduced perceived sources of moral sentiments to the effects of direct and indirect sympathy. While 'direct sympathy' connected agents with the 'affections and motives of the person who acts', 'indirect sympathy' determined if the reception of a particular action had merit.<sup>73</sup> The agents' observation of this cause and effect relationship in human interactions as an 'impartial spectator' influenced how they determined the 'propriety of conduct'. This process, therefore, depended upon social interactions, a regard to public opinion, and a prudent regard to self-interest. The activity of observing useful virtues in others (i.e. qualities that excite pleasure) and then applying those qualities in future actions from the self-interest of social or moral advancement resonated with the 'polite' culture's interest in self-improvement. Contrary to Smith, Stewart argued that 'the necessity of social intercourse as an indispensable condition implied in the generation and growth of our moral sentiments, does not arise merely from its effect in holding up a mirror for the

<sup>71</sup> For further reading on the development of Smith's moral theory see Nicholas Phillipson, *Adam Smith: An Enlightened Life*, (London: Penguin, 2011).

<sup>72</sup> Stewart, *Active and Moral Powers*, 311.

<sup>73</sup> Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, 124.

examination of our own character; but from the impossibility of finding, in a solitary state, any field for the exercise of our most important moral duties'.<sup>74</sup> For Stewart, moral conduct stemmed from the 'moral faculty', which was improved through social exchanges, rather than the product of a prudent regard to observed acts. This fundamental difference between Smith's and Stewart's moral philosophy did not exist in the abstract but affected how applied ethics were used in 'real life' situations.

Stewart suggested that Smith's 'obscure' reduction of all moral perceptions under 'sympathy' failed to account for moral obligations when it did not immediately benefit agents to act morally.<sup>75</sup> For Stewart, Smith's theory neglected the branches of duty that 'recurs on us constantly in all our ethical disquisitions, as an ultimate fact in the nature of man'.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, self-interested actions that benefited others were a by-product of the agent's intentions of self-improvement and Smith did not fully explain how agents should act when self-interest and the interests of others conflict. For example, if an agent was presented with the opportunity to advance in society but this advancement came at the expense of denying others the same opportunity does the agent proceed with this exclusive privilege or forfeit this opportunity from a moral obligation to others. In addressing this question, Stewart remarked:

From recollecting my own judgments in similar cases in which I was concerned, I infer in what light my conduct will appear to society; that there is an exquisite satisfaction annexed to mutual sympathy; and that, in order to obtain this satisfaction, I accommodate my conduct, not to my own feelings, but to those of my fellow creatures'.<sup>77</sup>

'Mutual sympathy' therefore depended upon agents giving priority to the feelings of others. The exercise of 'sympathy' and its reciprocation from others, in turn, influenced

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<sup>74</sup> Stewart, *Active and Moral Powers*, 311.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 309.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 312.

the development of both ‘moral character’ and ‘national character’. While Stewart believed that ‘man’s assuming the appearance of virtue [formed] the real foundation of the rules of good breeding in polished society’, he taught that humankind was created for something more substantial through imposed duties that fulfilled God’s design.<sup>78</sup> In explaining how this principle functioned in practise, Stewart wrote:

For when I have once satisfied myself with respect to the conduct which an impartial judge would approve of, I feel that this conduct is *right* for me, and that I am under a moral obligation to put it in practice. If I had had recourse to no expedient for correcting my first judgment, I would, nevertheless, have formed some judgment or other of a particular conduct as right, wrong, or indifferent, and the only difference would have been, that I should probably have decided improperly, from an erroneous or partial view of the case.<sup>79</sup>

Supported by moral obligations to God, others, and themselves, agents required knowledge of how others felt and how particular situations affected their conduct in order to develop virtuous sociability. Similar to Reid, Stewart taught that the power to ‘sympathise’ with others was strengthened through strong affections; he did not, however, suggest that benevolent affections among agents were necessary for the practise of ‘sympathy’. In doing so, Stewart encouraged the ethical conduct amongst the wider public not merely between loved ones. Thus, the application of Stewart’s system involved a grander stage than Reid had envisioned. This slight divergence between Reid and Stewart in treating ‘affections’ as the ‘beauty of virtue’ had a part in Stewart’s discussion of ‘moral taste’.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 312-313.

### Discovering Moral Qualities in 'Polite' Culture: Stewart on 'moral taste'

Few philosophical themes captured 'polite' interests more than concepts of 'taste'.<sup>80</sup> On this theme, Stewart praised Archibald Alison's *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (1790), which appeared in four editions by 1815, for its 'ingenuity and elegance'.<sup>81</sup> While Stewart was satisfied with Alison's treatment and, therefore, refrained from its discussion in his *Elements*, he returned to the subject in 1810 after retiring from teaching. In the third and fourth essays of his *Philosophical Essays* (1810), Stewart examined the nature, development and improvement of 'taste'.<sup>82</sup> Stewart wrote:

That Taste is not a simple and original faculty, but a power gradually formed by experience and observation. It implies, indeed, as its ground-work, a certain degree of natural sensibility; but it implies also the exercise of the judgement; and is the slow result of an attentive examination and comparison of the agreeable or disagreeable effects produced on the mind by external objects.<sup>83</sup>

Moreover, 'taste' and corresponding notions of 'arbitrary beauty' were formed through associations of ideas: 'classical associations', 'national or local associations', and 'personal associations'.<sup>84</sup> For Stewart, 'Classical associations' developed from 'a learned education' of Greek and Roman poetry and sculptures.<sup>85</sup> Stewart cautioned that 'it must not, however, be imagined, that, in any instance, they furnish us with principles from which there lies no appeal; nor should it be forgotten, that their influence does not

<sup>80</sup> See Margaret Jacob, 'Polite Worlds of Enlightenment', in *The Enlightenment World*, edited by Fitzpatrick, Jones, Knellwolf, and McCalman, (London: Routledge, 2004), 272-287.

<sup>81</sup> Stewart, *Elements*, 361-362.

<sup>82</sup> Stewart, *Philosophical Essays*, vol. two, 449-550.

<sup>83</sup> Stewart, *Elements*, (1802), 361. In alignment with the writings of Hugh Blair, Stewart wrote that taste's 'characteristical quality is said to consist in "a power of receiving pleasure from the beauties of nature and of art"' (Stewart, *Philosophical Essays*, 461).

<sup>84</sup> See Emanuele Levi Motera, 'Reid, Stewart and the Association of Ideas', *Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, 3:2, (Sep. 2005): 157-170.

<sup>85</sup> Stewart, *Philosophical Essays*, 488.

reach to the most numerous class of the people'.<sup>86</sup> Since at that time the diffusion of a 'classical' education was not standard in Parish school curriculum whilst its practise in Scottish public schools depended upon respective teachers, Stewart stipulated the social limitations of this association.<sup>87</sup> In contrast, 'National associations' of beauty 'exert over the heart a power greater, perhaps, than that of any other associations whatsoever' due to its availability across social ranks.<sup>88</sup> These parochial associations of 'beauty' contributed to the rise of 'instinctive patriotism'. Despite not being an original principle, 'instinctive patriotism' and 'national associations' shaped the formation of early habits and judgments of 'beauty'. Similar to 'national associations', 'personal associations' developed from early experiences most often from distinct perceptions of natural beauty from childhood surroundings. Stewart wrote that these associations formed 'from the peculiarities in the features of those whom we have loved; and other circumstances connected with our own individual feelings'.<sup>89</sup> As Stewart warned, early habits rarely exercised the innate faculties of the mind to their proper purposes. For example, Stewart suggested that agents who did not guard against prejudicial judgments of 'beauty' concerning belongings or property were more susceptible to misjudging the 'beauty' or imperfections of their neighbour's property or of foreign national cultures. This too implied the social need to cultivate the instinctive branches of duty. While 'taste' was 'alive only to such impressions as fashion recognises and sanctions', Stewart taught that God created humankind's moral powers for a higher purpose.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> See R.D. Anderson, *Education and the Scottish People, 1750-1918*, (OUP, 1995).

<sup>88</sup> Stewart, *Philosophical Essays*, 489.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 491.

Stewart, therefore, identified a categorical difference between 'polite' concepts of 'taste' and the moral qualities sensed from 'moral taste'.<sup>91</sup> The latter had an important place in Stewart's system of moral education. Distinct from 'taste', the principle of 'moral taste' sensed 'moral beauty' in nature, manners, and in creations of the fine arts. He wrote:

Considered as a principle of action, a cultivated moral taste, while it provides an effectual security against the grossness necessarily connected with many vices, cherishes a temper of mind friendly to all that is amiable, or generous, or elevated in our nature...when separated, however, as it sometimes is, from a strong sense of duty, it can scarcely fail to prove a fallacious guide; the influence of fashion, and of other casual associations, tending perpetually to lead it astray.<sup>92</sup>

Like the other 'auxiliary principles', 'moral taste' required 'much exercise for its development and culture', however, its refinement faced obstacles of exaggerated imaginations of 'beauty' and 'moral beauty'.<sup>93</sup> Consequently, false ideals of 'moral beauty' threatened the exercise of 'moral taste' with unachievable standards.<sup>94</sup> This dissatisfaction could result in agents removing themselves from active pursuits in public life and thereby withdrawing useful talents that would benefit society.<sup>95</sup> On this consequence, Stewart wrote:

The great nurse and cherisher of this species of misanthropy is solitary contemplation; and the only effectual remedy is society and business, together with a habit of directing the attention rather to the correction of our own faults than to a jealous and suspicious examination of the motives which influence the conduct of our neighbours'.<sup>96</sup>

The exercise of 'moral taste' therefore required social intercourse with a realistic perception of human nature and 'moral beauty'. Yet this practise in the public sphere did

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<sup>91</sup> See Dabney Townsend, 'Dugald Stewart on Beauty and Taste', *The Monist*, 90:2, (2007): 271-286.

<sup>92</sup> Stewart, *Outlines*, 1:163.

<sup>93</sup> Stewart, *Active and Moral Powers*, 321.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 322.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 322-323.



not follow Hutcheson's and Shaftesbury's earlier treatment of aesthetics that, in different ways, understood concepts of 'right and wrong' as a sense of the beautiful.<sup>97</sup> For Stewart, these theorists conflated the proper functions of the 'moral faculty' and consequently rendered audiences vulnerable to the false perceptions of 'moral beauty' in 'polite' productions. For example, 'polite' rules for judging refined 'taste' were often compatible with virtue, however, 'moral beauty' was encountered differently than those forms of beauty commonly produced by 'polite' activities. A refined 'moral taste' sensed excellence of 'moral character' and the fulfillment of moral duties by agents who exercised virtuous sociability. Thus, Stewart's teaching of 'moral taste' required exercise in 'real life' governed by the 'fixed principles' of his programme of moral education. In teaching how to exercise the 'auxiliary principles of the moral faculty', Stewart showed how applied ethics, drawn from natural religion and metaphysics, encouraged universal benevolence and informed modernity. This practical process of developing virtuous habits in Scottish 'polite' society testified to the utility of his programme of moral education and its role in the public domain.

### **Conclusion**

In concluding his final lecture of 1802, Stewart remarked that 'I shall look back to this time with satisfaction, in having discharged a duty of as great importance to the public, as most men in a private station can be called on to fulfil [sic]'.<sup>98</sup> Amidst powerful counter-Enlightenment interests between 1790 and 1805, Dugald Stewart's programme of moral education sought to revive the 'Moderate' Scottish Enlightenment through the

<sup>97</sup> On the difference between Hutcheson's and Shaftesbury's moral thought see Simon Grote, 'Hutcheson's Divergence from Shaftesbury', *Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, 4:2, (Sep. 2006): 159-172.

<sup>98</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy 1801-1802*, taken by James Bridges, EUL MS Dc.5.88, 123.

diffusing applied ethics as a way to inform modernity. In advancing this objective, Stewart appealed to earlier 'Moderate' values of free expression, promotion of Enlightenment science, and embrace of Scottish 'polite' culture. Contrary to 'polite' rules of conduct that largely entailed constructed notions of fashionable manners, Stewart taught that humankind was instinctively ethical and inclined toward universal benevolence. The realisation of this natural ideal required the guidance of a properly regulated education that instructed us how to exercise the faculties and operations of the mind. Of these faculties, the 'auxiliary principles of the moral faculty' assisted the cultivation of ethical dispositions in unique ways. As active and moral powers of the mind, the principles of 'a regard to character', 'sense of the ridiculous', 'sympathy', and 'moral taste' were highly useful in the 'real life' situations of Scottish 'polite' culture. According to Stewart, 'where they all maintain their due place, in subordination to the moral faculty, they tend at once to fortify virtuous habits, and to recommend them, by the influence of amiable example, to the imitation of others'.<sup>99</sup> Whilst practical for securing refined manners in 'polite' society, the 'auxiliary principles of the moral faculty' strengthened attachments to the branches of moral duty as a central purpose of his system. Through reinforcing humanity's obligations to God, others, and themselves, Stewart sought to encourage the practise of universal benevolence at a time when the counter-Enlightenment policies bred 'instinctive patriotism', censorship of the public sphere, and prejudices toward the science of the mind.

The counter-Enlightenment policies of the 1790s led to a campaign to remove secularism in the Faculty of Arts at Edinburgh University. Of the groups associated with the counter-Enlightenment, the new leadership of the so-called Moderate party in the Church of Scotland believed impressionable young men required the guidance of

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 324.

enlightened ministers. In league with this belief, they opposed professors who were seen as corrupting Christian principles and thus endangering the moral development of future generations. The tensions between late eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy and counter-Enlightenment censorship policies since the early 1790s unfolded in the context of 1805 John Leslie case. The following chapter will examine how this episode exemplified Stewart's campaign against counter-Enlightenment interests and his efforts to secure a place for his modern version of the Scottish Enlightenment that centered on the perfection of the mind.

## Chapter Three

### **In Defence of the Scottish Enlightenment: Dugald Stewart's role in the 1805 John Leslie Affair**

In the first decade of the nineteenth century the persistence of counter-Enlightenment policies did not prevent Dugald Stewart's programme of moral education from flourishing through the success of his students. 'His disciples', as James Mackintosh commented, 'he lived to see among the lights and ornaments of the Council and the Senate; and without derogation from his writings it may be said, that his disciples were among his best works'.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Brown, Sydney Smith, Francis Horner, Thomas Carlyle, Henry Brougham, and Henry Cockburn amongst others demonstrated their unwavering support and application of his moral thought by advancing its ideals in the influential *Edinburgh Review*. As Biancamaria Fontana has shown, 'the reviewers thought, with Stewart, that all scientific disciplines ultimately had their foundation in the philosophy of the mind'.<sup>2</sup> Contributors to the *Edinburgh Review* (established in 1802) revitalised the 'Moderate' values of the Scottish *litterati* whose papers appeared in the journal's namesake in 1755. These emerging leaders of the Scottish Whig party, like their predecessors in the earlier *Review*, promoted 'Moderate' values such as tolerance for controversial scientific, literary, and philosophic innovations. At the heart of the magazine's diverse essays was the realisation of Stewart's educational system that groomed virtuous citizens who in turn would gradually elevate the moral and intellectual standards of their community. In league with the broader ambitions of Stewart's programme, the *Edinburgh Review* supported his campaign against counter-

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Dugald Stewart, *Lectures on Political Economy*, edited by William Hamilton, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1877), ix.

<sup>2</sup> Biancamaria Fontana, *Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society: The Edinburgh Review, 1802-1832*, (CUP, 1985), 96. In addition, Gordon Macintyre has shown that 'Stewart's reputation as a teacher also survived for many years [and] as late as 1872 the *Edinburgh Review* claimed that "as a public lecturer he was, and has remained, without a rival"' (Macintyre, *Dugald Stewart*, 243).

Enlightenment policies as they encroached upon practises of ‘Moderatism’ at Edinburgh University.

The new Moderate party of the Church of Scotland (led by George Hill) jeopardised the continuation of Stewart’s system of moral education and secularism in the Faculty of Arts at Edinburgh University by conspiring to monopolise those chairs and censor theories, which they believed encouraged dangerous philosophical scepticism and irreligion. In an 1806 issue of the *Edinburgh Review*, Francis Horner wrote:

For some years past, it has been perfectly well known, to those who take an interest in the prosperity of our University, that certain Ministers of Edinburgh entertained a systematic design of distributing as many of the Professorships as possible among themselves; and that, besides the professional chairs [and] Theology, those of several profane sciences were allotted as very convenient appendages to the benefices of the city.<sup>3</sup>

While plural appointments within the Kirk and the Faculty of Divinity existed without opposition, the clergymen of Edinburgh sought to expand their influence beyond divinity studies.<sup>4</sup> By demanding that their candidate for a chair must retain his ministerial office if elected, the so-called “Moderates” ensured their ecclesiastical interests and theological views would be represented in the University curriculum and in determining University affairs as members of the Senatus Academicus. On this practise, Stewart wrote ‘that our Theological Professorships should be held by Ministers of Edinburgh, has been always my opinion and my wish...but in no other case whatever, am I able to conceive an argument which can be urged in favour of such a measure’.<sup>5</sup> Contrary to Stewart’s

<sup>3</sup> Francis Horner, ‘A Review of Dugald Stewart’s *A Short Statement of Some Important Facts*’, in *The Edinburgh Review or Critical Journal*, vol. VII, (Edinburgh, 1806): 113.

<sup>4</sup> As Stewart’s contemporary, Andrew Dalzel, then professor of Greek, illustrated in writing the history of Edinburgh University that professorial and ecclesiastical pluralism was an established practise in the Faculty of Divinity (Andrew Dalzel, *History of the University of Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1862), 334-335).

<sup>5</sup> Stewart to William Fettes, Lord Provost 12 February 1805, in Dugald Stewart, *A Short Statement of Some Important Facts, Relative to the Late Election of a Mathematical Professor in the University of Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh: Creech and Archibald Constable & Co., 1805), 9. John Playfair expressed a similar opinion to the Lord Provost in claiming that if the practise of pluralism was permitted in the

opinion on the extent of pluralism, the clergymen of Edinburgh exercised this practise in their 1805 endorsement of Thomas McKnight's candidacy for the Chair of Mathematics at Edinburgh University.

The circumstances of the chair canvass turned controversial when Edinburgh clergymen attacked John Leslie, a well-respected mathematician and natural philosopher with no affiliation to the Church of Scotland, for his questionable religious convictions. They were offended by Leslie's Whiggish ideas of liberal scientific progress and promotion of Humean thought expressed in Note Sixteen attached to his *Inquiry into the Nature and Propagation of Heat* (1804).<sup>6</sup> The clergymen of Edinburgh, therefore, attempted to secure McKnight's appointment by tarnishing Leslie's academic reputation and circulating their concerns regarding his character and religious principles. As J.B. Morrell has shown, the so-called 'Hill junto', led by George Hill at St Andrews University had previously obstructed Leslie's earlier ambitions for professorships on similar grounds.<sup>7</sup> The 1805 philosophical debate over 'causation', which stemmed from Leslie's praise of Hume, furnished the new Moderates with what they saw as evidence of

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Faculty of Arts 'the competition for vacancies in the University would thus be greatly narrowed; and instead of extending, as it does at present, to all the men of letters in the kingdom, would be in effect confined to the Ministers of Edinburgh' (John Playfair to William Fettes, Lord Provost of Edinburgh on 23 February 1805, in Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 22). Playfair's criticism of pluralism, in particular, stirred a backlash from Scottish ministers. For example, Thomas Chalmers, before receiving fame as a Church reformer and philosopher, criticised Playfair's remarks on pluralism in his first publication *Observations on a Passage in Mr. Playfair's Letter to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, relative to the Mathematical Pretensions of the Scottish Clergy*, (Cuper-Fife: R. Tullis, 1805). Chalmers privately revealed to his brother John that this work came in an attempt to 'enliven [his] situation a little by other employments', which partly explained why he did not slavishly adhere to these views in his later work (Thomas Chalmers to John Chalmers on 3 September 1805, in *Memoirs of Thomas Chalmers, D.D LL.D*, edited by William Hanna, vol. one, (Edinburgh: Constable, 1854), 65). Unlike many of his students, Chalmers did not hold Stewart's moral philosophy in a high regard. He remarked that '[h]is lectures seem to me to be made up of detached hints and incomplete outlines, and he almost uniformly avoids every subject which involves any difficult discussions' (Chalmers, *Memoirs*, 54).

<sup>6</sup> Drummond and Bulloch suggest that 'Leslie's qualifications were higher than those of McKnight, but he was regarded as a Whig' (Andrew Drummond and James Bulloch, *The Scottish Church, 1688-1843: The Age of the Moderates*, (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1973), 155).

<sup>7</sup> J.B. Morrell, 'The Leslie affair: careers, kirk and politics in Edinburgh in 1805', *Scottish Historical Review*, 54:1, (1975): 68-71.

Leslie's philosophical scepticism. But, as Ian Clark argues, 'what was really at stake was "moderatism" as a theological and ecclesiological system'.<sup>8</sup> John Burke and John Wright have discussed the philosophical debate over 'causation'.<sup>9</sup> Stewart's central role in these controversies, however, has yet to be fully explored. This chapter will examine Stewart's opposition to counter-Enlightenment censorship policies in the context of his defence of Leslie and his system of moral education.

The 1805 Leslie affair was inextricably linked with earlier conservative policies in the 1790s and as such should not be treated as an isolated episode. Stewart and his former students recognised that if they permitted the Moderates to manipulate this election to a chair as they had in past competitions the new Moderates would undermine secularism in the Faculty of Arts at Edinburgh University. For this reason, Stewart argued that 'interests of a higher nature than those of any individual were now at stake'.<sup>10</sup> The elections at St Andrews University during the 1790s exemplified the political nature of "Moderate" candidates. As shown in chapter one, George Hill, who emerged as the leader of the Moderate party in the early 1790s, followed the conservative policies of his chief patron, Henry Dundas.<sup>11</sup> Considering that Hill's Moderates criticised Leslie for a central theory that Stewart had publically endorsed, he believed his system of moral education was under attack too. He remarked that 'insult after insult had been offered to the University...concerning the foundations of those essential principles which it is my

<sup>8</sup> Ian D. Clark, 'The Leslie Controversy, 1805', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 14, (1962): 179.

<sup>9</sup> John Burke, 'Kirk and Causality in Edinburgh, 1805', *Isis*, 61:3, (1970): 340-354; John Wright, 'The Scientific Reception of Hume's Theory of Causation: Establishing the Positivist Interpretation in Early Nineteenth-Century Scotland', in *The Reception of David Hume in Europe*, edited by Peter Jones, (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd., 2005), 327-347. This essay first appeared in *Hume and Hume's Connexions*, edited by John Wright and M.A. Stewart, (EUP, 1994).

<sup>10</sup> Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 97.

<sup>11</sup> See chapter one, 42-45; George Cook, *The Life of the Late George Hill D.D., Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews University*, (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company, 1820), 213-4.

professional duty to illustrate, and which it has been the great object of my life to defend'.<sup>12</sup> If the Moderates acquired the majority of University professorships, Stewart believed they would overturn the intellectual environment that Principal William Robertson had laboured to establish between 1762 and 1793. In opposition to the Moderates' campaign, Stewart rallied his former students to join him in defending secularism of the arts at Edinburgh University. According to Stewart, 'the ruin of the University was threatened by the measures which were avowedly in contemplation among a party of the Edinburgh clergy...I enjoy the comfort in reflecting that I did all in my power to avert them'.<sup>13</sup> In doing so, Stewart's defence of Leslie embodied his broader support for his system of moral education as a way to sustain the Scottish Enlightenment and his pedagogical commitment to developing a benevolent society. Furthermore, his treatment of 'causation' (which the Moderates opposed) appealed to Reidian philosophy amongst other Scottish philosophers in an effort to justify the social necessity of properly understanding the science of the mind. Evidence in support of this argument will be shown in three sections: the new Moderates' ambitions to seize more influence within Edinburgh University through plural appointments; Stewart's defence of his system of moral education and his treatment of 'causation'; and finally, Leslie's trial in the General Assembly. My discussion of Stewart's prominent role in the Leslie affair builds upon the scholarship of Ian Clark, John Burke, J.B. Morrell, and John Wright by arguing that in addition to philosophical, ecclesiastical, theological and political interests the fate of Scottish Enlightenment education at Edinburgh University was also at stake.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 97.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> For an overview of these earlier works on the Leslie case see the introduction, fn76.



### **A Moderate Campaign for Dominance in the Faculty of Arts**

The death of John Robison, professor of natural philosophy at Edinburgh University (1773-1805), on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1805, provided the professor of mathematics John Playfair with an opportunity to fill the vacant chair. The Lord Provost, with the approval of the Town Council and Edinburgh Magistrates, wasted little time offering Playfair the Chair of Natural Philosophy on 6<sup>th</sup> February.<sup>15</sup> Thus, Playfair's former professorship, held jointly with Adam Ferguson, became available for election.<sup>16</sup> Henry Cockburn believed that 'the Moderate clergy, who had long encouraged pluralities and wished to multiply clerical professorships, allotted the place to one of themselves'.<sup>17</sup> Thomas McKnight, a former assistant of John Robison and a Moderate minister at Trinity Church in South Leith, was the first candidate to enter the chair canvass two days after Playfair's new appointment.

The Moderate clergymen of Edinburgh, led by John Inglis, James Finlayson, David Ritchie, and Henry Grieve, supported McKnight's candidacy on the condition that, if elected, he retain his clerical charge in South Leith.<sup>18</sup> Roger Emerson suggested that such an election 'would benefit his political friends and was quite in keeping with Moderate views on pluralism, but it was greedy and showed a willingness to monopolise power'.<sup>19</sup> McKnight recognised that his candidacy would benefit from the endorsement of Dugald Stewart and John Playfair, who had both formerly held the desired chair. This proved a difficult obstacle, however, since McKnight maintained connections with

<sup>15</sup> Morrell, 'The Leslie Affair', 75-76; Clark, 'The Leslie Controversy', 180-181.

<sup>16</sup> Andrew Dalzel, Minutes from the 30 March 1805 meeting of the Senatus Academicus, in Dugald Stewart, *Postscript to Mr. Stewart's Short Statement*, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1806), 14.

<sup>17</sup> Henry Cockburn, *Memorials of His Time*, (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1856), 200.

<sup>18</sup> Clark, 'The Leslie Controversy', 179.

<sup>19</sup> Roger Emerson, *Academic Patronage in the Scottish Enlightenment: Glasgow, Edinburgh and St Andrews Universities*, (EUP, 2007), 331.

Scottish conservatives—particularly those in the Dundas interest—while Stewart and Playfair were well-known Foxite Whigs.<sup>20</sup>

Upon learning that McKnight sought to retain his ministerial office as an absolute condition of his candidacy, Stewart and Playfair warned the Lord Provost, Sir William Fettes, of this perceived conflict of interests.<sup>21</sup> Stewart noted that if the Moderates succeeded, it would result in ‘the ruin of an establishment from which this city has derived, for more than two centuries, much solid emolument, as well as literary distinction’.<sup>22</sup> Although Stewart and Playfair assured the Lord Provost that they did not currently support another candidate, they both undoubtedly had in mind John Leslie whom they had endorsed in his previous four attempts at a university chair.<sup>23</sup> The Lord Provost heeded their complaints and extended the chair canvass to other potential candidates. John Leslie, at the age of thirty-nine, entered the competition as an established scientist. With the patronage of Thomas Wedgwood, Leslie had published six papers and a book concerning the nature of heat. These received international attention and his *Inquiry* (1804) was awarded the 1804 Royal Society of London’s Count Rumford prize for scientific achievement.<sup>24</sup> As an Edinburgh divinity student in 1787, Leslie attended Stewart’s lectures on moral philosophy and impressed Stewart with his scientific curiosity and intellectual aptitude.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> For further reading on Scottish Whig attachments to secular liberal education see Jacyna, L.S. *Philosophic Whigs: Medicine, Science, and Citizenship in Edinburgh, 1789-1848*, (London: Routledge, 1994).

<sup>21</sup> Stewart and Playfair letters to Lord Provost February 1805, in Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 6-26.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Morrell, ‘The Leslie affair,’ 80; Macintyre, *Dugald Stewart*, 126.

<sup>24</sup> Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 27; Morrell, ‘The Leslie affair’, 72-73; Macintyre, *Dugald Stewart*, 126.

<sup>25</sup> During his studies at Edinburgh, Leslie’s excellence in natural science motivated his shift from divinity studies to natural philosophy. Stewart later remarked that ‘Leslie received numerous letters promoting his intelligence and character from the leaders in academia and the intellectual world of letters [such as] Sir Joseph Banks, Dr. Maskelyne, Astronomer Royal; Dr. Hutton, Professor of

John Leslie's prestigious Rumford prize and his support from esteemed men of letters made him the obvious choice for the chair since McKnight lacked an international reputation as a scientist. Despite their glaring differences in qualifications, the Moderates did not admit defeat. They circulated rumours and hinted at concerns regarding Leslie's religious principles.<sup>26</sup> For instance, James Finlayson's Fast Day Sermon on 20<sup>th</sup> February questioned if a scholar of uncertain religious convictions should hold an office that allowed him to influence young men. As a minister at St. Giles and professor of logic at Edinburgh University, Finlayson exemplified the Moderates' model for pluralism, which would, in their opinion, safeguard impressionable young men from sceptical theories by entrusting their education to enlightened ministers.<sup>27</sup> On behalf of the Edinburgh ministers, John Inglis remarked that 'the education of youth, if not universally in the hands of the Clergy, has been universally placed under their superintendency'.<sup>28</sup> He furthered this point by asking: 'Whether it be safe and prudent, in times like the present, to deprive Religion of this security, by the adoption of a system which shall, in any measure, exclude its Ministers from that share in the education of youth?'<sup>29</sup> The Moderates therefore justified the necessity of pluralism as a perceived civic duty to protect the survival of religion and safeguard the moral development of young men. On

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Mathematics in the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich; late Professor Robison of Edinburgh; Mr. Baron Maseres, a man known in the Republic of Letters, for more than half a century. Furthermore, Leslie received references from his circle of friends who included; Sir William Erskine of Torry, Baronet, Mr. Dempster of Dunichen, Mr. Josias and Mr. Thomas Wedgewood, Dr. Hunter of St. Andrew's, and Mr. Playfair of Edinburgh' (Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 27-30).

<sup>26</sup> Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 28-39; Morrell, 'The Leslie affair', 76; Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, 331; Clark, 'The Leslie Controversy', 180.

<sup>27</sup> As a previous student of Finlayson's Lectures on Logic, Henry Cockburn characterised him as 'a grim, firm-set, dark clerical man; stiff and precise in his movements; and with a distressing pair of black, piercing, Jesuitical eyes' (Cockburn, *Memorials*, 27).

<sup>28</sup> John Inglis, *An Examination of Mr Dugald Stewart's Pamphlet, Relative to the Late Election of a Mathematical Professor in the University of Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh: Peter Hill, 1805), 52.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-4.

the other hand, Stewart interpreted the Moderates' attack against Leslie and secular education as an underhanded tactic to acquire more influence within Edinburgh

University. He remarked:

When the Clergy of Edinburgh, by aspiring at every University office which becomes vacant beyond the circles of Medicine and of Law, [opposed] the pretensions of whatever lay candidates shall presume to interfere with the monopoly at which they are aiming [and] no better illustration of this remark can ever occur, than what has actually happened in the case of Mr. Leslie.<sup>30</sup>

The Moderate party owed their previous success in securing plural appointments, particularly at St Andrews University, to the influence of Henry Dundas.<sup>31</sup> Dundas, however, did not impose his influence on the election as he had in past competitions. The fatigue from years in the political sphere, the heightened hostilities with Napoleonic France, and an impending impeachment rendered Dundas detached from the Leslie affair.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, he personally reassured Leslie that this election would be decided on scholarly merit not political strength.<sup>33</sup> Without the political guidance and support from Dundas, the Presbytery of Edinburgh and the Moderate party could not avoid the forthcoming conflict.<sup>34</sup>

### **A Cause for Controversy: Stewart on the theme of 'causation'**

Several days before the Town Council's potential election of Leslie, the clergymen of Edinburgh discovered Leslie's Note Sixteen attached to his book on heat,

<sup>30</sup> Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 47-48.

<sup>31</sup> For further reading on Dundas see David Brown, 'Henry Dundas and the Government of Scotland'; Michael Fry, *The Dundas Despotism*; Holden Furber, *Henry Dundas: First Viscount Melville, 1742-1811: Political Manager of Scotland, Statesman, Administrator of India*, (OUP, 1931).

<sup>32</sup> John William Ward first Earl of Dudley to Helen Stewart 2 April 1805, in *Letters to 'Ivy' from the first Earl of Dudley*, edited by S.H. Romilly, (London: Longmans and Green, 1905), 26.

<sup>33</sup> Morrell, 'The Leslie Affair', 74.

<sup>34</sup> Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, 334.

‘which, it was said, involved all the Atheistical principles of Mr Hume’s philosophy’.<sup>35</sup> In his Note, Leslie remarked that ‘Mr. Hume is the first, as far as I know, who has treated of causation in a truly philosophic manner [and] his *Essay on Necessary Connexion* seems a model of clear and accurate reasoning’.<sup>36</sup> This opportune find appeared suspicious considering no one had mentioned the Note the previous year during its circulation or during its examination by the Royal Society of London. After hearing that Leslie’s Note harboured atheistic principles, Stewart commented:

I accordingly sent for the book, which till then I had never opened, and was not a little astonished, when I found that the passage objected to contained nothing (nothing at least connected with the alleged charge) but what I myself, and many others much better and wiser than me, had openly avowed as our opinions.<sup>37</sup>

Although Leslie’s unguarded praise of Hume might suggest his alignment with Humean philosophy, Stewart appealed to Reid’s philosophy in assessing Leslie’s implied distinction between Hume’s treatment of physics and metaphysics. In the science of the mind, Hume believed that impressions of human nature from innate senses and reflexes, in most cases, preceded their corresponding ideas. By denying that neither reasoning nor experience provided conclusive evidence of a supreme design, Hume rejected the idea that efficient causes could be traced from their perceived effects. Thus, Hume rejected that intuitive notions offered evidence for inferences on efficient causes. Since orthodox Calvinists attributed God with efficient causal power in all earthly effects, Hume’s philosophy was widely regarded as sceptical and challenging to revealed and natural

<sup>35</sup> Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 30. In an 1806 review of Leslie’s book, Sydney Smith wrote that ‘this is that famous note, which a faction of the Edinburgh clergy, with a rare mixture of malignity and ignorance, made the pretext for persecuting Mr. Leslie, and reviving in the Scottish church those fatal discords by which some, and the fanaticism of others, have, in less enlightened ages, too often disgraced the religion of peace’ (Sydney Smith, ‘A Review of Leslie’s *An Experimental Inquiry into the Nature and Propagation of Heat*’ *The Edinburgh Review or Critical Journal*, vol. VII, (1806): 75).

<sup>36</sup> John Leslie, *An Experimental Inquiry into the Nature and Propagation of Heat*, (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute, 1804), 521.

<sup>37</sup> Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 31.

religion. As previously discussed, Thomas Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (1764) challenged the foundation of modern scepticism, with particular attention to Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-1740), and provided a 'realist' alternative in Common Sense philosophy that drew from the thought of Francis Bacon, Samuel Clarke, Francis Hutcheson, and George Turnbull amongst others.<sup>38</sup> Reid's opposition to Hume's mitigated scepticism, however, did not include his treatment of the necessary sequential conjunctions in nature. According to Hume, 'if there be any relation among objects, which it imports us to know perfectly, 'tis that of cause and effect'.<sup>39</sup> Reid noted that Hume 'seems to me to reason justly from his definition of a cause, when he maintains, that anything may be the cause of anything; since priority and constant conjunction is all that can be conceived in the notion of a cause'.<sup>40</sup> While both men agreed on the existence of necessary conjunctions of causes and effects in nature, they arrived at different conclusions on its metaphysical implications. Reid's position in this debate had a profound influence on Stewart's moral philosophy and his understanding of this philosophical theme. As shown in chapter one, Stewart created a modern and accessible version of Reid's Common Sense philosophy in his programme of moral education.

In teaching the 'active and moral powers of the mind' with particular attention to the operations of the 'moral faculty', Stewart drew a clear distinction between humankind's limited powers to cause an effect, such as determining to act morally or immorally, and God's unrestrained power as the creator of everything. This principle accepted that only God possessed causal power in nature since inert matter necessarily

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<sup>38</sup> See introduction, 9-16.

<sup>39</sup> David Hume, *Essays and Treatise on Several Subjects*, vol. two, new edition, (Edinburgh: Kincaid and Donaldson, 1764), 88.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, (Edinburgh: John Bell, 1788), 290.

followed the laws of nature as part of His creation. Although Hume remained sceptical of God's existence, Reid and Stewart agreed with his premise that necessarily constant and invariable sequences of events existed in nature. In his *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1792), Stewart wrote:

In consequence of the inferences which Mr Hume has deduced from his doctrine concerning Cause and Effect, some later writers have been led to dispute its truth; not perceiving, that the fallacy of this part of his system does not lie in his premises, but in the conclusion which he draws from them.<sup>41</sup>

According to Stewart, Hume's premise, that we do not observe the connexion between cause and effect, only its constant sequential conjunctions, was not original or incorrect. He argued that Hume's notion of the conjunctions between physical events coincided exactly with the earlier thought of Isaac Barrow, Joseph Butler, John Locke, Nicolas Malbranche, Thomas Hobbes, and George Berkeley.<sup>42</sup> These theorists of unquestioned religious convictions supported Hume's belief that the link among causes and effects in nature remained invisible and an efficient cause could not be traced from observed effects by *a priori* reasoning. In a 1796 lecture, Stewart remarked that 'there is no instance in which we perceive such a necessary connexion between two successive events as might enable us to infer the one from the other by reasoning a priori [and] knowledge of efficient causes is beyond our reach'.<sup>43</sup> This premise on its own did not deny that a deity existed or a supreme power caused effects in nature, but that humankind could not conclusively understand this connexion. When Hume applied this premise to metaphysics

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<sup>41</sup> Stewart, *Elements*, n71.

<sup>42</sup> In establishing the precedence for Leslie's remarks in Note Sixteen, Stewart referenced Dr. Barrow's *Mathematical Lectures at Cambridge* (1662-69), Dr. Clarke's *Works & First Reply to Leibnitz*, Rev Butler's *Sermons*, Dr. Berkeley's *Siris & The Procedure, Extent, and Limits of Human Understanding*, Richard Price's *Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals*, Dr. Reid's *Active Powers*, Dr. Waring's *Principles of Human Knowledge*, Dr. Ferguson's *Principles of Moral and Political Science*, Dr. Robison's *Mechanical Philosophy*, and Dr. Gregory's *Philosophical and Literary Essays* (Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 57-94).

<sup>43</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy, 1796-1799*, taken by J.M. Lee, EUL Dc.8.143, 3.

he questioned God's link as the first cause in earthly effects, which demonstrated the danger in an unqualified adoption of Humean philosophy. The Moderate clergymen of Edinburgh claimed that

If the language of Mr. Leslie's Note, cannot be otherwise understood than as a denial of an efficient or operating principle in any cause, no reasoning can be necessary to show, that this doctrine, were it admitted, would at once put an end to all possibility of arguing, from what we have been accustomed to call the *works* of God. But, in fact, the doctrine strikes more directly at the foundation of religion.<sup>44</sup>

The Moderates' argument against Leslie's Note hinged on connecting it to Hume's metaphysical conclusions regarding 'causation', which challenged the existence of God's efficient power. If successful, they could label him an atheist and easily engineer his removal from the competition. According to Stewart, if Leslie 'had qualified the first sentence by saying, that Mr Hume's *Essay on Necessary Connexion*, (*so far as it relates to physical causes and effects merely*), is a model of clear and accurate reasoning, I do not think it possible that the slightest objection could have been made'.<sup>45</sup> In advancing this point, he ridiculed the Moderates' belief that Leslie's wording in Note Sixteen made it 'impossible to avoid applying to everything under the name of cause, whether ascribed to matter or to mind'.<sup>46</sup> Stewart suggested that this reasoning conflated the intended purpose of Leslie's discussion. In the proper context, Leslie argued 'against the unphilosophical supposition of the agency of invisible *intermedia* to account for the phenomena of gravitation [which] has been considered one of the most dangerous weapons of the Atheist'.<sup>47</sup> By considering that the concept of invisible intermedia was not

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<sup>44</sup> Anonymous to George Hill 1 May 1805, 'We are authorized to insert the following observations', in Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 111. This letter was published in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* on 2 May 1805.

<sup>45</sup> Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 32.

<sup>46</sup> Anonymous, 'We are authorized to insert the following observations', in Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 107.

<sup>47</sup> Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 32-3.



necessarily limited to a supreme agent, atheists reasoned that infinite agents of causation could exist. In turn, the possibility of infinite agents of cause in nature would undermine arguments of God's omnipotence. In support of this point, Stewart reminded the Moderates that the late John Robison advanced a closely similar argument against attributing inert matter with causal power in his 'Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe'.<sup>48</sup>

John Wright considered the possibility that Leslie had misunderstood which parts of Humean philosophy Reid had rejected or accepted.<sup>49</sup> A review of Leslie's Note in the context of his book and the fact that Stewart discussed this theme at length in the first lecture of his moral philosophy course, which Leslie had attended, suggests otherwise. While Leslie did not clearly differentiate between Humean physics and metaphysics, the subject matter of his book implied an exclusively physical treatment of 'causation'. In its preface, Leslie commented 'I have no desire to shrink from liberal criticism; but I request my book to be perused and examined with the same temper it was written'.<sup>50</sup> In the context of discussing the etymology of causality and how its ambiguity impeded scientific progress, Leslie suggested that 'the unsophisticated sentiments of mankind are in perfect unison with the deductions of logic, and imply nothing more at bottom, in relation of cause and effect, than a *constant and invariable sequence*'.<sup>51</sup> Despite briefly alluding to metaphysical applications of 'causation', Leslie qualified that 'it would be foreign to my present object to engage in such discussions'.<sup>52</sup> The wording in his Note

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., n34.

<sup>49</sup> Wright, 'The Scientific Reception of Hume's Theory of Causation', 23.

<sup>50</sup> Leslie, *Nature and Propagation of Heat*, XV.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 522.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., XV.

could be applied to metaphysics, as shown by the Moderate ministers of Edinburgh, but such an interpretation would be alien to the ‘temper’ of his book.

The discussion of ‘causation’ in the Leslie case directly related to the permissibility of teaching controversial theories to impressionable young men. The Moderate clergymen of Edinburgh claimed:

Their duty to the public and to the rising generation does not, in their opinion, admit of their overlooking, on this account, what may appear dangerous or subversive of religion, in the doctrine of those to whom the education of youth is committed... It is for this reason that the education of youth, and their instructors in every department of literature, have, in the Christian world, been placed under the superintendency of the Ministers of Religion.<sup>53</sup>

If the Moderates’ campaign for pluralism prevailed, Stewart’s system of moral education would also be viewed as inappropriate since he openly advocated the same sentiments as Leslie’s Note Sixteen in his classroom. Stewart professed ‘that the doctrine which has been so strongly objected to in Mr Leslie’s Note, coincides exactly, as far as I am able to judge of it, with what I have myself advanced in a work which has been not for many years in the hands of the public’.<sup>54</sup> Since Stewart followed the Scottish philosophical tradition of combining pedagogy and philosophical inquiry, his publications closely replicated themes in his lectures. Thus, Stewart’s defence of Leslie by extension represented a defence of his programme of moral education. Stewart also addressed the Moderates’ concerns that the wider public’s religious convictions would be threatened by Leslie’s allegedly sceptical theories. By referencing his *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (first published in 1792 with an 1802 second edition), he implied that the public found merit in his treatment of ‘causation’, which complemented Leslie’s Note, without a hint of controversy on this theme.<sup>55</sup> Contrary to the belief of these clergymen,

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<sup>53</sup> Inglis, *An Examination*, 139.

<sup>54</sup> Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 48.

<sup>55</sup> While Stewart did not receive any controversy over his treatment of ‘causation’, he did endure complaints over his references to Condorcet. See chapter one, 49-51.

Stewart promoted the idea that philosophers should explore causality in nature and the mind. In a 1796 lecture, Stewart remarked:

We find from experience that certain events are invariably conjoined, so that when we see the one we expect the other; but our knowledge in such cases extends no farther than to the fact. To ascertain those established conjunctions of successive events which constitute the order of the universe; to record the phenomena which exhibit to our observation and to refer them to their general laws, is the great business of philosophy.<sup>56</sup>

Stewart clearly believed that philosophers, not theologians, should investigate the necessary conjunctions between causes and effects. According to Stewart, theologians as authorities in revelation often err in treating a philosophical theme without confident knowledge of its consequences. This belief did not imply that philosophers could not also entertain theological views or serve as clergymen, but that moralists and metaphysicians, for Stewart, should investigate philosophical truths not divinity. Although these different approaches often overlapped, particularly in natural theology, the purposes of their methods set them apart. He demonstrated this point by referencing his opponents' initial claim that Reid opposed all of Hume's premises.<sup>57</sup> The fact that Reid challenged Hume in his *Inquiry into the Human Mind* (1764) surely motivated the Presbytery of Edinburgh to interpret his opposition to Humean philosophy in absolute terms. Stewart remarked that 'the truth probably was that, in [their] zeal to convict Mr. Leslie of atheism, [the Moderates] neglected to weigh very accurately the import of [their] own confident assertions'.<sup>58</sup> In doing so, the Moderates interpreted Leslie's Note as supporting Hume's conclusions in metaphysics without drawing a distinction between metaphysics and physics whilst implying that God determined human actions. This misinterpretation of Leslie's Note served the Moderates' campaign to discredit his reputation as McKnight's

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<sup>56</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy 1796-9*, taken by J.M. Lee, EUL Dc.8.143, 5.

<sup>57</sup> Anonymous letter to Hill, in Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 115.

<sup>58</sup> Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 107.

competition. Meanwhile, their counter-Enlightenment beliefs towards education placed them at odds with Stewart and Reid whose theories were increasingly taught throughout the Atlantic World. Stewart suggested that a firm understanding of the wider arguments concerning 'causation' must precede a proper understanding of this philosophical debate. He maintained that his system of moral education facilitated this prerequisite.

Thomas Brown, a disciple of Stewart who attended his moral philosophy course in 1792 and contributed to the *Edinburgh Review*, exemplified the application of Stewart's programme in defending Leslie.<sup>59</sup> Brown noted in the 'science of analysis, that the philosophy of the mind must be considered'.<sup>60</sup> In doing so, Brown supported Hume's premises and critiqued Reid's treatment of 'causation' and the 'active powers of the human mind'. He suggested that in exertions people merely feel a desire for action instead of a sense of power as Reid and Stewart argued.<sup>61</sup> This desire of action, coupled with the belief that a sequence of events or motions will follow, provided confidence in the reoccurrence of desired effects. Brown remarked:

the phenomena of mind succeed each other in a certain order; the phenomena of matter also have their peculiar order: but, were we to judge, by the language of each, from which of the two sequences our idea of power is derived, the probability would seem on the side of the latter.<sup>62</sup>

He did not ascribe to matter self-sustaining power, but merely suggested that we improperly label notions of power in metaphysics with analogies of power in the material world. While developing his interpretation of 'causation', Brown supported Leslie's

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<sup>59</sup> Brown contributed two important publications in support of Leslie: Thomas Brown, *Observations on the Nature and Tendency of the Doctrine of Mr. Hume, Concerning the Relation of Cause and Effect*, second edition, (Edinburgh: Mundell and son, 1806); Thomas Brown, *A Short Criticism of the Terms of Charge against Mr Leslie in the Protest of the Ministers of Edinburgh, as explained by them in their late pamphlet*, (Edinburgh: Mundell and Son, 1806).

<sup>60</sup> Brown, *Observations*, 13.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-4.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

conclusion that ambiguous language impeded scientific progress. Thomas Chalmers later remarked that Brown's *Observations* provided an excellent insight into this complex theme and 'to stamp endurance upon it, it had to be dilated into a volume'.<sup>63</sup> His *Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect* (1818) extended his earlier argument and from popular demand received three editions within the same year of its first publication.<sup>64</sup> Brown's treatment of 'causation' demonstrated the application of Stewart's system of moral education by investigating a controversial philosophical theme, as a philosopher, without falling victim to scepticism or sacrificing high intellectual standards.

The Moderates' emerging concerns regarding Leslie's Note appeared a formidable obstacle in his election. For this reason, Leslie sought to clarify his remarks for the consideration of the Presbytery of Edinburgh's upcoming meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March.<sup>65</sup> In a letter to Andrew Hunter, professor of divinity at Edinburgh, Leslie explained that 'it did not fall under my plan to point out in a treatise entirely confined to physical discussions' concerning Hume's misapplication of his premises since this has been done by Dr. Reid and various other writers in a manner which I conceive to be completely satisfactory to every reader who understands the argument'.<sup>66</sup> In order to address their complaint with a compromise, Leslie pledged to change the controversial wording in subsequent editions (as Stewart had done with his second edition of *Elements*).<sup>67</sup> His explanation satisfied Hunter's reservations and though he was too ill to

<sup>63</sup> Thomas Chalmers to Mrs. Glasgow of Mountgreenan, 11 July 1822, in *A Selection from the Correspondence of the Late Thomas Chalmers*, 118.

<sup>64</sup> Thomas Brown, *An Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect*, (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company, 1818).

<sup>65</sup> Macintyre, *Dugald Stewart*, 127.

<sup>66</sup> John Leslie to Rev Hunter, March 1805, in Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 37.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 39. Regarding the earlier controversy over Stewart's *Elements* see chapter one, 49-52.

attend the meeting, he supplied Henry Grieve with a copy of Leslie's letter.<sup>68</sup> The Presbytery of Edinburgh curiously did not record the details of the meeting as normally practised, but ultimately determined that Leslie's explanation did not remove their concerns.<sup>69</sup> During this meeting, they drafted a formal complaint against Leslie's potential election. Stewart remarked that 'a long paper (which must have been previously prepared, for it takes no notice of Mr. Leslie's letter to Dr. Hunter) was accordingly presented to the Patrons of the University' by Henry Grieve.<sup>70</sup> They claimed *avisamentum*, the ancient legal right enacted by James VI that required the Town Council to consider the advice of Edinburgh ministers in deciding University appointments.<sup>71</sup> Since the establishment of the Chair of Mathematics in 1674, this legal right had never been enforced in an election of a professor of mathematics.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, this right had been exercised only twice, with the elections of Andrew Dalzel (professorship of Greek) in 1772 and Andrew Hunter (professorship of Divinity) in 1779, during William Robertson's administration, which held canvases for every chair.<sup>73</sup> The chairs of Divinity and Greek contributed to preparing ministers, for which the input from Church officials proved relevant. According to James Ferguson, the clergymen's written complaint on 12<sup>th</sup> March exercised the extent of their right to *avisamentum* and afterwards they should have ceased any further actions.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 40.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Presbytery of Edinburgh, 'A Letter of Complaint to the Lord Provost and Town Council from the ministers of Edinburgh', in Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 41.

<sup>72</sup> Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 47.

<sup>73</sup> Nicholas Phillipson, 'The Making of an Enlightened University', 79-81.

<sup>74</sup> James Ferguson to Dugald Stewart, 5 January 1806, in Stewart, *Postscript*, 29-30.

The Town Council informed the Presbytery of Edinburgh that the election would be held on 13<sup>th</sup> March; to the dismay of the Moderates, however, they convened on 12<sup>th</sup> March.<sup>75</sup> By misinforming the Moderates about the date of the election, the Town Council deprived them of an opportunity to rally further support for McKnight and strengthen their argument against Leslie. The Edinburgh Magistrates and Town Council consisted primarily of Pittites and supporters of Dundas with only a small pocket of Foxite Whigs. The blatant deception of the Moderates regarding the election date signified that the Moderate clergymen did not enjoy the full support of Scottish “Tories” in this election. After learning about the Town Council’s meeting, the Moderates hastily supplied them with a draft of their complaint. In defiance of the Moderates’ threat ‘to prosecute [Leslie’s] ejection from office in any competent court, civil or ecclesiastical’, the Town Council proceeded with Leslie’s election the following day.<sup>76</sup> Due to the technicality that Adam Ferguson still jointly held the chair, the Town Council formally re-elected Leslie on 29<sup>th</sup> March, only after he supplied proof of his Rumford prize.<sup>77</sup>

After exhausting a failed legal suspension of Leslie’s election in civil court, the Presbytery of Edinburgh fulfilled their threat and advanced their complaint against Leslie in ecclesiastical courts. Their meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> March marked the first clear division concerning Leslie’s election between the so-called Popular party (also known as the Evangelical party) and the Moderate party within the Presbytery of Edinburgh. On 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1805, the *Aberdeen Journal* reported:

On one side by Doctors Grieve and Inglis, who maintained that the Presbytery should concur with the ministers of Edinburgh in going on with an investigation into Mr. Leslie’s conduct; while, on the other hand, it was contended by Sir Harry

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<sup>75</sup> Macintyre, *Dugald Stewart*, 127; Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, 332.

<sup>76</sup> Presbytery of Edinburgh Letter to the Lord Provost and Town Council, in Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 45.

<sup>77</sup> John Burke, ‘Kirk and Causality in Edinburgh, 1805’, 346.

Moncrieff, Dr. Hunter, and others, that the matter should go no further and the representation dismissed.<sup>78</sup>

As the narrow minority within the Presbytery, the Popular ministers could not prevent the Moderates from continuing their complaint against Leslie to the higher ecclesiastical court of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale. In opposition, the members of the Popular party aligned themselves with Leslie's supporters and did not attend the Synod meeting that unanimously approved the complaint against Leslie for the consideration of the General Assembly.<sup>79</sup> The Moderates claimed they would 'cease their proceeding, so far as it concerns Mr. Leslie individually, in the event of his consenting to withdraw the offensive part of his publication, either by cancelling the leaves of the book which contain the note referred to, or by any other means equally effectual'.<sup>80</sup> In this request, the Moderates clearly wanted Leslie to resign from his chair. Cancelling the circulation of his book would be admitting his dangerous treatment of 'causation', which would equally fuel their argument for his removal. While this proposed concession, if accepted, suggested an end to their complaint regarding Leslie, the Moderates did not indicate that they would stop their claim for avisamentum in future University elections. The Moderates, therefore, maintained their counter-Enlightenment objective of expanding the Church's influence, particularly Moderate ministers, within all the eligible faculties of the University.

The reversal of traditional ideological beliefs on education between the Moderate and Popular parties implied a significant change within the Kirk. The tolerance for secular thought by the earlier 'Moderate' ministers during the height of the Scottish

<sup>78</sup>A description of the 27 March 1805 meeting of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, *The Aberdeen Journal*, issue 2986, 3 April 1805.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-11.

<sup>80</sup> Dr. Grieve's statement during 10 April 1805 meeting of the Synod, in Robert Lundie, *Report of the Proceedings and Debate in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Respecting the Election of Mr. Leslie to the Mathematical Chair in the University of Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh: Constable, 1806), 10.



Enlightenment, therefore, was not consistent with the actions of the “Moderate” party under George Hill’s leadership. In these respects, the Popular party’s support of Leslie reflected ecclesiastical rivalry more than political or educational concerns. They prudently protected their interests within the Kirk by opposing the Moderates’ attempt to gain more power within Edinburgh. Apart from ecclesiastical politics, the determination of the General Assembly rendered real consequences to Leslie, Stewart’s system of moral education, and secularism in the Faculty of Arts at Edinburgh University. Although Leslie succeeded in his election, he could potentially lose his chair if the General Assembly determined him unfit to teach young men. In addition, if the General Assembly supported the Moderates’ justification for pluralism as means to prevent the spread of philosophical scepticism and atheism, they could appeal to this ruling in future University elections.

The controversy concerning Leslie’s election entered the public sphere with the publication of an anonymous letter addressed to George Hill on 20<sup>th</sup> April and a memorial of the Moderates’ complaint sent to members of the General Assembly on 1<sup>st</sup> May which was published in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* the following day. Although the letter’s author remained a mystery, John Inglis claimed that the Moderate clergymen of Edinburgh ‘held themselves responsible for its doctrine and argument’.<sup>81</sup> In this letter, the Moderates suggested that Leslie’s explanation was ‘an unqualified defence of both himself and his doctrine’.<sup>82</sup> By combining Leslie’s character and his Note, the Moderates framed an argument that, if successful, could only result in Leslie’s removal from the Chair of Mathematics. By publishing their concerns, the Presbytery of Edinburgh reintroduced a potentially dangerous philosophical theme to the attention of the public,

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<sup>81</sup> Inglis, *An Examination of Mr. Dugald Stewart’s Pamphlet*, 4-5.

<sup>82</sup> Anonymous letter to Principal Hill entitled, ‘We are Authorised to insert the Following Observations’, in Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 105.

which could potentially result in the denial of God's existence. Blind to this possibility, the Moderates warned that

the publication of this doctrine [Leslie's book], in connexion with the circumstances of the times, when there appears an infidel party arraying itself, with increasing confidence, against the religion of the country, they cannot but consider the appointment of Mr. Leslie to be a Professor and teacher of youth, as a measure of very unfriendly aspect to our Christian Faith, and our Church establishment for its support.<sup>83</sup>

By drawing attention to the dangers of discussing controversial theories, they unintentionally contradicted their claimed purpose and the counter-Enlightenment policies, established during the Scottish Seditious trials, which censored philosophical discourse and controversial publications. In an intimate letter to Leslie, Joseph Banks wrote:

They would surely have acted more properly & in a manner better becoming their Station in the community, by suffering your Book to remain quietly on the Philosopher's shelf without dragging forward into the public notice a few passages, which, at best, can only lead to a controversy in which Orthodoxy will be put to the hazard, & more of it probably lost than gain'd.<sup>84</sup>

The Moderate clergymen's attack against Leslie's Note consequently stirred concerns over the theological and philosophical implications of 'causation'. This reaction was certainly unintentional. Inglis believed their opposition to Leslie's Note would cause 'a greater degree of caution in the discussion of those philosophical questions which are connected with the principles and the vitals of religion'.<sup>85</sup> Although Inglis's comment was directed at censoring education, the Moderates received harsh criticism for their conduct and misinterpretations of philosophy from Stewart and his former students.

The University of Edinburgh's Senatus Academicus, an internal council of professors, appointed Stewart to defend Leslie and the interests of the University during

<sup>83</sup> Presbytery of Edinburgh, 'Memorial', in Stewart, *A Short Statement*, 116-117.

<sup>84</sup> Joseph Banks to John Leslie 19 April 1805, in *The Letters of Sir Joseph Banks*, edited by Neil Chambers, (London: Imperial College Press, 2000), 264.

<sup>85</sup> Inglis, *Examination*, 144.

his trial. He countered the Moderates' publications with *A Short Statement of Some Important Facts* (1805). Stewart's short pamphlet, published a week before the convention of the General Assembly, revealed evidence of the Presbytery of Edinburgh's attempt at pluralism and why their complaint against Leslie's Note Sixteen was ill-conceived.<sup>86</sup> His alignment with theorists of unquestionable religious convictions, many of who were also mathematicians, revealed how he embraced the tradition of engaging rather than avoiding controversial themes in the pursuit of philosophical truths.<sup>87</sup> In doing so, Stewart justified the purpose of his system of moral education. The circulation of these conflicting publications contributed to the public's anxiety over the future direction of the University and Church as the General Assembly approached.

### **Defending Scottish Enlightenment Moral Education in Leslie's Trial**

The 1805 General Assembly convened in Edinburgh on 22<sup>nd</sup> May under a cloud of controversy generated by the recent publications. A large crowd attempting to gain access to the proceedings suggested that laymen were aware of the import that Leslie's trial would have on the direction of the Church of Scotland and Edinburgh University. The ideologically divided Assembly considered two distinct proposals: a 'reference' against Leslie's election to the chair of mathematics, and a 'complaint' against the so-called Moderate clergymen of Edinburgh's conduct regarding Leslie. Robert Lundie, who reported the proceedings, observed that the laymen in attendance overwhelmingly sided in favour of Leslie and, at several points during the two-day debate, gave vocal

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<sup>86</sup> Stewart, *A Short Statement*, iii.

<sup>87</sup> In addition to referencing Reid, Stewart cited the works of Bacon, Barrow, Clarke, Butler, Berkeley, and Robison in support of his philosophy and Leslie's Note Sixteen (Ibid., 48-64).

expression to their desire for justice.<sup>88</sup> This ideologically charged crowd created a tense atmosphere for the Moderates as they attempted to persuade the Assembly on the merits of the ‘reference’.

Leslie’s trial centred on the question of secularism in the Faculty of Arts at Edinburgh University and the extent of the Church’s relationship with the University. The Moderate ministers advanced the counter-Enlightenment’s well-worn argument that British institutions as well as young men were in danger from sceptical or atheistic philosophy. They felt obligated, as clergymen, to prevent the election of a professor who they believed advanced theories that would subvert religious convictions and civil order. Grieve claimed their protest against the diffusion of sceptical theories to be ‘most agreeable to the civil and religious institutions of this part of the united kingdom, and best suited to promote the good of the public’.<sup>89</sup> As shown in the previous section, Stewart advocated the same principles in his moral philosophy course as those found in Leslie’s controversial Note. His pamphlet illustrated this connection in unmistakable terms, which the Moderates, as evinced by their references to his pamphlet, had read prior to the General Assembly. Thus, the Moderates’ complaint against Leslie’s election revealed their concerns about Stewart’s programme of moral education and their overarching campaign for dominance at Edinburgh University.

Stewart’s pamphlet depicted Leslie as an unwarranted victim of the Moderates’ campaign for plural offices and their opposition to secular education. His argument

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<sup>88</sup> Robert Lundie, observed that ‘the assembly, after experiencing some disruption from the crowd of strangers, who, not finding accommodation in the galleries, pressed into the body of the house, to the temporary exclusion of some members’ (Lundie, *Report*, 1, in *Tracts, Historical and Philosophical, relative to the important discussions which lately took place between the members of the university and the Presbytery of Edinburgh, respecting the election of Mr. Leslie to the professorship of mathematics in that university*, vol. one, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1806)). According to Lundie, those in attendance observed the clear divisions within the assembly of clergymen and Ruling Elders with the Moderates advancing the complaint against Leslie seated on the right side of the assembly and the Popular party coupled with Leslie’s defenders, including Stewart, positioned on the left side (Ibid., 1-13).

<sup>89</sup> Grieve’s speech in the General Assembly 22 May 1805, in Ibid., 8.

resonated with the Ruling Elders of the General Assembly and consequently motivated the Moderates to separate their opinion of Leslie's character from their argument against his Note. In contradiction to their earlier statements, David Ritchie clarified that 'I do not judge Mr. Leslie, but I judge his book'.<sup>90</sup> Although the Moderate clergymen of Edinburgh spoke as if they were exclusively concerned with the religious implications of Leslie's Note, their 'reference' enveloped larger social concerns whilst justifying the practise of ecclesiastical and professorial pluralism. This attempted misdirection did not deter discussions regarding pluralism, 'moderation', and secular education. Stewart, who attended the trial, watched as members of the Popular party and Ruling Elders borrowed evidence from his pamphlet in their defence of Leslie.

The Moderate clergymen of Edinburgh who struggled under cross examination appeared to be the ones on trial with their motivations and character repeatedly questioned by Leslie's defenders. Henry Moncreiff, a jurist and friend of Stewart, argued that 'while the only point to be tried before the competent court, relates, not to Mr. Leslie, but to the general powers vested in the ministers of Edinburgh, and which they are to exercise in future times'.<sup>91</sup> At the Bar of the General Assembly, Moncreiff suggested that the Moderates' actions against Leslie surpassed their limited association with the Faculty of Arts at Edinburgh University and they should be held accountable for this transgression. Like Stewart, Moncreiff believed that the outcome of the Leslie case would determine the fate of the Scottish Enlightenment. He cautioned that the 'character of our country and of our age [is at stake and] we shall be judged by the decision of this day, not merely at home by the people of Scotland, but by the inhabitants of countries from which

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<sup>90</sup> Ritchie's speech in the General Assembly 22 May 1805, in *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>91</sup> Moncreiff's speech in the General Assembly 22 May 1805, in *Ibid.*, 45.

we are far removed; in England, through Europe, in Asia, and in America'.<sup>92</sup> In response to Moncreiff, Grieve supplied justification for their influence on university affairs in the form of two previous Acts of the General Assembly: 'Act concerning the inspection of Universities and Colleges' (Act 14, session 13, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1711) and 'Act for promoting Religion and Learning in Universities and Colleges' (Act 12, session 9, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1719).<sup>93</sup> Of course, these earlier ecclesiastical Acts appeared almost half a century before Robertson and his contemporaries established the practise of 'Moderatism' in the Kirk and University. Similar to the earlier 12<sup>th</sup> March Presbytery of Edinburgh meeting where they reintroduced the ancient right of avisamentum, the Moderates clearly anticipated questions regarding the Kirk's role in university affairs and justified their involvement accordingly through legal and ecclesiastical acts passed during pre-Enlightenment times. This well-researched justification for Scottish divines to significantly influence university appointments had farther implications than Leslie's future as a professor. If the Assembly vindicated the 'reference' against Leslie, the Kirk would dominate in deciding future university appointments in the Faculty of Arts.

The nature of the Presbytery of Edinburgh's conduct toward Leslie in advancing their campaign to establish pluralism in the Faculty of Arts led dissenting ministers to question their understanding of 'Moderatism' as an operating ideology. John Muckersey, who supported the 'complaint' against the Moderates, remarked that 'I was much surprised, when I first heard of this reference; and my surprise was not lessened, when I heard from what quarter it had arisen'.<sup>94</sup> While he supported the Moderates' initial reservations concerning Leslie's Note, he believed the Moderate clergymen of Edinburgh

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>93</sup> Greive's speech in the General Assembly 22 May 1805, in Ibid., 52-53.

<sup>94</sup> Muckersey's speech in the General Assembly 22 May 1805, in Ibid., 62.

failed to limit their involvement to examining Leslie's doctrine in an appropriate 'Moderate' fashion. In doing so, he suggested that 'moderation' involved two categorical approaches: 'active moderation' and 'passive moderation'. While 'active moderation' considered the middle ground opinion between infidelity and religious fanaticism, 'passive moderation' was the middle point between the extreme views of a particular *question*.<sup>95</sup> In Leslie's case, the question on the origin and nature of 'causation' received extreme opinions between the religious orthodox notion of the 'operative principle' and Hume's 'invariable sequence'. Since the initial objection against Leslie's election involved his treatment of this philosophical question, Muckersey believed it should be examined with 'passive moderation'. He remarked that 'the objection I had to them was, that they proceeded on the grounds of passive moderation, but conducted themselves in an active manner'.<sup>96</sup> For Muckersey, the Moderate clergymen of Edinburgh transformed Leslie's treatment of 'causation' into an active campaign to prevent the spread of dangerous philosophical ideas diffused through secular education. The Moderates, therefore, sought to establish new policies where the Kirk held considerable power over every branch of Scottish universities.

Despite combining both 'passive' and 'active' types of 'moderation' in the 'reference', the Moderates developed their agenda to safeguard impressionable young men with more force than adequately addressing the question of 'causation'. Consequently, the Moderates clearly did not guard their treatment of 'causation' against close scrutiny. After stirring commotion from calling the 'reference' 'false, cowardly, and calumnious', John A. Murray, an Edinburgh Whig and close friend of Jeffrey, Horner, and Brougham, furthered Stewart's earlier claim that the Moderates' attributed inert

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

matter with causal power in their public criticism of Leslie's Note.<sup>97</sup> Murray boldly argued:

In direct opposition to these reverend gentlemen, I must state it as my conviction, that their opinions, and not the opinions of Mr Leslie, are atheistical; nay, that the very language which they employ, is the ordinary language of atheists. The language of the ministers of Edinburgh plainly implies, that, in considering the relation of cause and effect subsisting among the phenomena of nature, there is a necessary connection between the effect which we behold, and the cause with which it is immediately conjoined; and that the former processes in itself an operating power over the latter.<sup>98</sup>

In their campaign to secure more influence within Edinburgh University and tarnish Leslie's reputation, the Moderates neglected the implications of their treatment of causality when applied to physics. In doing so, the clergymen of Edinburgh unintentionally supported the concept of invisible intermedia often used by atheists to disprove the existence of God. Inglis later wrote that their unguarded wording exclusively treated the metaphysical discussion of 'causation' as it related to their interpretation of Leslie's Note.<sup>99</sup> This miscalculation surely assisted Stewart's view that a properly regulated programme of moral education based on metaphysical philosophy was the best way to prevent the ignorant acceptance of sceptical theories. Furthermore, Stewart believed clergymen who misinterpreted fundamental philosophical themes were inappropriate, if not dangerous, to direct curious young minds towards discovering philosophical truths. Shortly after Murray's speech, George Hill must have recognised the potential danger for the Moderates if this line of questioning continued and motioned that the Assembly adjourn until the next day.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Murray's speech in the General Assembly on 22 May 1805, in *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 109-110.

<sup>99</sup> Inglis, *Examination*, 137-138.

<sup>100</sup> Lundie, *Report*, 114-115. Henry Erskine too recognised the gravity of this debate in stating that 'inconvenient as attendance might be, he would agree to no such proposal as that which was now made; he must insist upon the renewal of the debate, to the exclusion of every other cause' (*Idem*, 115).



The events of the debate quickly circulated throughout Edinburgh by the following morning. A correspondent for the *Scots Magazine* observed that large crowds, eager to gain admittance, gathered around the assembly building as early as eight and nine o'clock despite the ten o'clock start time.<sup>101</sup> After several speeches examining the dangers of 'causation' when applied to metaphysics, Malcolm Laing, an Edinburgh jurist, returned to unravelling the Moderates' motives for their relentless protest against Leslie's election. Laing stated that after the Town Council favoured Leslie for the chair

the clergy of Edinburgh took alarm, and immediately had recourse to that system of intrigue and misrepresentation, which they have too long and too successfully pursued, and by which they seem to have resolved to appropriate the enjoyment of academical honours and advantages exclusively to themselves.<sup>102</sup>

Laing suggested that such practises of pluralism impaired the intellectual vivacity of Scottish institutions where Scots acquired so much of their national pride as well as their claim of Enlightenment. In particular, he targeted the practises of pluralism at St Andrews supported by George Hill and Henry Dundas.<sup>103</sup> Laing predicted that Edinburgh University's fame, as an important Scottish Enlightenment institution, would decay with the establishment of elections based on professorial and ecclesiastical pluralism rather than scholarly merit. Henry Erskine, the leader of the Scottish Whig party during the 1790s, furthered Laing's warning by noting that if the Moderates' use of pluralism succeeded at Edinburgh the intellectual degradation would soon follow. Erskine stated that 'if I had fifty sons, I would send none of them to the university, while it is placed in a situation so degrading...and were I applied to by my friends at a distance to place their sons at the university, I should feel it my duty to dissuade them from the design...' "send

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<sup>101</sup> *The Scots Magazine and Edinburgh Literary Miscellany*, vol. LXVII, (1805): 402.

<sup>102</sup> Laing's speech in the General Assembly on 23 May 1805, in Lundie, *Report*, 146.

<sup>103</sup> Morrell, 'The Leslie affair', 66.

your sons anywhere, but to this university”<sup>104</sup>. Erskine’s involvement in the case demonstrated the political importance of the trial. Furthermore, the continuity on the issue of secular education between the older leaders of the Scottish Whigs, Erskine and the Earl of Lauderdale, and the emerging figures, Horner and Jeffery, against their political opponents implied a cross-generational solidarity to Scottish Whigs. The fact that Erskine and Lauderdale were significant figures in the national Whig party also implies a wider British concern rather than a parochial issue over an elected mathematics professor. Their collective support for Leslie and defence of secular education represented their wider battle against “Tory” counter-Enlightenment policies. Erskine concluded:

[Hill] is sensible that his friends are stumbling, and he wishes to make their fall as soft and gentle as possible. But I cannot consent to allow justice, candour, liberality, and common sense, to be stuffed into a pillow, that they may fall in perfect safety, and repose upon it in peace.<sup>105</sup>

In defence of his party, Hill maintained that Leslie should have supplied the Moderate ministers of Edinburgh with another explanation as requested before it reached the Church’s supreme court. He argued that Leslie’s silence after his election suggested some form of guilt on his part. Lauderdale, however, interrupted Hill’s speech by mentioning that Lord Kelly and Mr. Durham of Largo advised Leslie that it would be in his interest not to furnish a second explanation.<sup>106</sup> Hill’s failed attempt to deflect the blame onto Leslie exhausted the Moderates’ argument in the General Assembly. Shortly after Hill’s speech, loud cries across the auditorium demanded an immediate vote.<sup>107</sup> The result dismissed the ‘reference’ against Leslie and sustained the ‘complaint’ against the

<sup>104</sup> Erskine’s speech in the General Assembly on 23 May 1805, in Lundie, *Report*, 159.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 212-213.

<sup>106</sup> Lauderdale’s speech in the General Assembly on 23 May 1805, in *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>107</sup> Lundie, *Report*, 236.

Moderates with ninety-six votes in favour and eighty-four votes opposed.<sup>108</sup> At least a third of the Assembly, however, abstained from casting a vote, which suggested a division or loss of influence within the Moderate party. Lundie observed that ‘upon the vote being announced, a shout of applause resounded from the galleries’.<sup>109</sup> Despite Leslie’s and Stewart’s victory at that moment, the verdict of the General Assembly did not conclude the Leslie affair.

Afterwards numerous pamphlets defending and ridiculing the Moderates’ conduct towards Leslie flooded British print culture.<sup>110</sup> In addition to Stewart’s pamphlet receiving three editions between May and December 1805, his pamphlet, together with other prominent writings on the Leslie affair, was collected for publication in two volumes of *Tracts, Historical and Philosophical* (1806).<sup>111</sup> Meanwhile, Scottish Whigs drew strength from their victory in the 1805 General Assembly to advance their opposition to the Moderates and counter-Enlightenment interests. In the *Edinburgh Review*, Francis Jeffrey wrote:

The evils which the [Moderates’] mistaken and suspicious conduct had produced, demanded the atonement; and far more advisable would it have been for their own interests, to seek shelter in the retreats of oblivion, than venture their cause against

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Here are two prominent examples of this continued interest in the Leslie case: John Playfair, *Letter to the Author of the Examination of Professor Stewart’s Short Statement of Facts*, (Edinburgh: Creech and Archibald Constable & Co., 1806); David Brewster, *An Examination of the Letter addressed to the Principal Hill on the Case of Mr. Leslie, In a Letter to its Anonymous Author. With remarks on Mr. Stewart’s Postscript and Mr. Playfair’s Pamphlet, by a Calm Observer*, (Edinburgh: Mundell, 1806). Duncan MacFarlan, a Moderate minister of Drymen, described how members of the Moderate party were treated in the wake of the 1805 General Assembly. He wrote that ‘the newspapers have announced their victory...their Pamphlets have continued to be industriously circulated, from one end of the island to the other...the Literary Journals have poured forth an incessant torrent of abuse against the Minority Members, who have been charged with the most illiberal views, insulted as abettors of persecution, and consigned to ignominy and disgrace’ (Duncan MacFarlan, *A Short Vindication of the Minority in the Late General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, (Glasgow: John Scrymgeour, 1806), 6).

<sup>111</sup> *Tracts, Historical and Philosophical, relative to the important discussions which lately took place between the members of the university and the Presbytery of Edinburgh, respecting the election of Mr. Leslie to the professorship of mathematics in that university*, two vols, (Edinburgh: Creech and Constable and Co., 1806).

the tribunal of the public...Neither pardon nor pity is due to a wanton and unprovoked attempt to injure the reputation of an unoffending individual. We may smile at the instrument, but we startle at the motives of so unaccountable a design: while the deliberate vindication of such conduct cannot but be considered as the signal even of popular indignation.<sup>112</sup>

In contrast, the *Anti-Jacobin Review* suggested that ‘the Presbytery of Edinburgh very laudably fulfilled the duty of their office’.<sup>113</sup> Responding to charges of religious fanaticism and misconduct, the Presbytery of Edinburgh appointed John Inglis to defend and vindicate their previous conduct in the Leslie affair. The timing of this reply to Stewart’s *Short Statement*, published seven months after his first edition, demonstrated a cunning attempt to out-manoeuvre Stewart, Playfair, and Leslie who were preoccupied with teaching. Stewart later remarked that ‘none of them could well be ignorant, that their attack was to find me occupied completely and indispensably with my Academical labours’.<sup>114</sup> While expanding upon their earlier arguments to safeguard the institution of religion and the adoption of religious principles, Inglis blamed William Robertson’s earlier failure to enforce the Confession of Faith and his promotion of secular education as a chief reason for the Moderates’ troubles in the Leslie case.<sup>115</sup> In this view, the Moderate clergymen of Edinburgh fulfilled a previously neglected obligation to the public and the institution of religion. This admission demarcated how Hill’s Moderate party fundamentally diverged from the earlier ‘Moderate’ values. Despite not sharing the *Edinburgh Review*’s interest in prolonging the debate, Stewart responded to Inglis with a short (nine pages) *Postscript* to his earlier pamphlet. He remarked:

I promised to remain at the bar of the public, till they should receive their doom. That doom I had the satisfaction to hear pronounced (not many hours after these

<sup>112</sup> Francis Jeffrey, *The Edinburgh Review*, 7:3, (March 1806): 261-262.

<sup>113</sup> *The Anti-Jacobin Review or Monthly Political and Literary Censor*, 23, (April, 1806): 400.

<sup>114</sup> Stewart, *Postscript to Mr Stewart’s Short Statement of Facts Relative to the Election of Professor Leslie*, 6.

<sup>115</sup> Inglis, *An Examination of Mr. Dugald Stewart’s Pamphlet*, 21.

words were written) in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; and the ratification, which it has since received from that more awful tribunal, whose unbiased and paramount sanction the justice of my cause emboldened me to invite and to solicit, has now fixed and sealed their destiny for ever.—IN THE PLACE WHERE THE TREE HATH FALLEN, THERE MUST IT LIE.<sup>116</sup>

The public vilification of the Moderates by Stewart and his former students coupled with the 1805 impeachment of Dundas enabled the continuation of Stewart's programme of moral education and the practise of secularism in the Faculty of Arts. After learning of Dundas's 1805 impeachment, Stewart rejoiced that his removal from office was 'synonymous with the emancipation and salvation of Scotland'.<sup>117</sup> The Moderate party's counter-Enlightenment efforts to acquire power through deception and misrepresentation, however, continued in the wake of Leslie's case.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, Leslie's opponents, particularly in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, persisted in publically questioning his character and religious principles until Edinburgh's civil court ordered them to stop on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1822.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Stewart, *Postscript*, 6.

<sup>117</sup> Stewart to Francis Horner 8 June 1805, in Dugald Stewart, *The Collected Works of Dugald Stewart*, edited by William Hamilton, vol. ten, (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable and Co., 1860), cxxxvii.

<sup>118</sup> In the 1807 General Assembly, George Hill once again distorted the words of another, this time the King's letter to the Kirk, in order to further the interests of the Moderate party. In relaying the King's words, Hill strongly implied that the King supported the Moderates' interests (George Cook, *Life of the Late George Hill, D.D. Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews*, (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., 1820), 195-200). Afterwards, Hill published these ideas in a pamphlet. This deception of the public motivated Henry Moncreiff, who was outspoken in Leslie's defence, to oppose his misrepresentation in *Remarks on A Pamphlet Entitled, "Substance of Principal Hill's Speech in the General Assembly, May 23, 1807, Upon the Motion for Thanking His Majesty for His Support of the Protestant Establishment*, (Edinburgh: Creech and Constable, 1807). This controversy in the shadow of the earlier 1805 Leslie case has yet to be fully unravelled and should receive further examination.

<sup>119</sup> Between 1820 and 1822, four articles appeared in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* that targeted Leslie's criticism of the Hebrew language as an attack upon the Old Testament in his book on arithmetic. In this work, Leslie wrote that 'the oriental nations appear generally to have represented the numbers as far as on thousand, by dividing their alphabet into three distinct classes. But the Hebrew, the rudest and poorest of all written languages, having only twenty-two letters, could advance no farther than 400; and to exhibit 500, 600, 700, 800, and 900, it had recourse to the clumsy expedient of addition, by joining 400 and 100, 400 and 200, 400 and 300, 400 and 400, and 400 with 400 and 100' (John Leslie, *The Philosophy of Arithmetic; exhibiting a progressive view of the theory and practice of calculation*, (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., 1817), 218). Like his earlier Note Sixteen, Leslie's opponents believed he was challenging Christianity. In the forty-fourth issue (November 1820) of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, published a letter from 'O.B.' (who was never fully identified) wrote that 'in a work of his [Leslie], treating on arithmetic, that 'celebrated' man thought proper to go

## Conclusion

The 1805 John Leslie case represented the culmination of political, ecclesiastical, philosophical, and educational disputes between Scottish Enlightenment thought and values and counter-Enlightenment interests since the French Revolution. Although the controversy emerged from John Leslie's election to the Chair of Mathematics and the religious implications of his Note Sixteen, Dugald Stewart interpreted the Moderate party's campaign to censor secular education at Edinburgh University as part of the counter-Enlightenment movement. Stewart's former students joined him in combating the Moderates with a superior philosophical argument where they exposed the dangers of expanding ecclesiastical and professorial pluralism beyond divinity studies. Although a faction of the Moderate party defended the Presbytery of Edinburgh's conduct, other Moderates, such as Sir David Brewster (a natural philosopher) distanced themselves from their conduct whilst supporting the merits of pluralism. According to Brewster, Stewart's circle, particularly John Playfair, failed to make a convincing argument for the 'incompatibility between the habits of clergymen and professors'.<sup>120</sup> The defeat of the Moderate clergymen of Edinburgh's campaign for pluralism did not end its practise

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out of his way to revile, in a dogmatic and insulting manner, the Hebrew language...A man who would go out of his path, on an inquiry on the nature of heat, to recommend an impious work—and in a treatise on arithmetic, to cast an ignorant sarcasm on the language of the Bible, or to sneer at the fancies of one of the Apostles, must ever be an object of suspicion to those who hold the Scriptures in honour, and impiety in detestation' O.B., *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 44 (November 1820): 230. Francis Jefferey, Henry Cockburn and James Moncrieff defended Leslie in his libel case against William Blackwood on 22 July 1822 seeking £5000 in damages for 'a series of libels, touching at once his character as a man of principle and honesty—his qualifications as a Professor—and his reputation as a man of science—which hold out all his studies and all his labours to the contempt of the world, whatever this magazine may find its way; and by which, at last, he is falsely accused of the infamous and disgraceful offence of corrupting the principles of the youth committed to his charge'. (Sir Walter Scott, 'Professor John Leslie against William Blackwood, for a libel in "Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine"', *The Edinburgh Annual Register*, 15, (1823): 78-79). The jury found Blackwood guilty of libel and awarded Leslie £100 in damages. The circumstances surrounding Leslie vs Blackwood has yet to be fully explored. But evidence suggests that this case shared many similarities with Leslie's earlier trial in the 1805 General Assembly.

<sup>120</sup> David Brewster, *An Examination of the Letter addressed to the Principal Hill on the Case of Mr. Leslie, In a Letter to its Anonymous Author*, 6.

within the party, but it certainly prevented its use as a condition of future appointments in the Faculty of Arts at Edinburgh University.

Stewart's role in the Leslie case represented larger concerns than his defence of one individual who happened to be a former student. In justifying the intellectual and moral benefits of his programme of moral education, Stewart upheld central 'Moderate' values for fostering an enlightened and benevolent state of society. The considerable support for this ambition from men of letters and clergymen associated with the Popular party testified to a rekindled commitment to enlightened thought and promotion of the circumstances where it could thrive. In the year following the Leslie affair, an anonymous author wrote that 'the voice of the enlightened and generous nation hath been lifted up to give to their names all the attractions by which wickedness can be distinguished; and that voice should be regarded as the voice of justice'.<sup>121</sup> At the birth of a new century, Stewart's victory in the Leslie affair symbolised a resurgence of the Scottish Enlightenment in defiance of counter-Enlightenment policies.

Tensions between late eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment thought and counter-Enlightenment policies existed in other parts of the Atlantic World. Since many of the circumstances that gave rise to Enlightenment and its counter-Enlightenment in Scotland—namely the diffusion of 'Moderate' values, Scottish philosophy, and the reception of the French Revolution—reverberated throughout the Atlantic World, did a version of the Scottish Enlightenment and its counter-Enlightenment exist in America's early republic? Samuel Stanhope Smith, who taught contemporaneously with Stewart as professor of moral philosophy and seventh president of the College of New Jersey (1795-1812), drew from 'Moderate' values and adapted Scottish philosophy in creating a distinct system of moral education at Princeton. His programme encountered a different

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<sup>121</sup> Anonymous, *Strictures on Mr. Duncan MacFarlan's Short Vindication of the Minority in the Last General Assembly of the Church of Scotland: In a Letter Addressed to its Author*, (Edinburgh: J. Johnstone, 1806), 9.

type of counter-Enlightenment whilst sharing many of the same objectives. Smith's creation of the Princeton Enlightenment, his applied ethics, and the circumstances surrounding his tension with what he saw as two converging counter-Enlightenment factions will be explored in the second part of this thesis.



## **Part Two**

### **Samuel Stanhope Smith and the Princeton Enlightenment**

## Chapter Four

### **Creating Enlightenment at Princeton: Samuel Stanhope Smith's programme of moral education, 1779-1812**

The tensions between Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy and counter-Enlightenment interests existed at institutions of higher education on either side of the Atlantic. As the professor of moral philosophy and president at the College of New Jersey (which later became Princeton University) from 1795 through 1812, Samuel Stanhope Smith shared Dugald Stewart's enthusiasm for Scottish philosophy and Scottish 'Moderate' values whilst combating counter-Enlightenment interests. Advising his step-grandson on where best to further his education in 1797, George Washington wrote that 'no college has turned out better scholars or more estimable characters than Nassau [and] not is there any one whose president is thought more capable to direct a proper education than Dr. Smith'.<sup>1</sup> In league with Stewart's attempts to sustain the Scottish Enlightenment by entwining the cultivation of the mind and 'Moderatism' as a way to inform modernity, Smith fostered a new type of Enlightenment at Princeton that owed tribute to prominent Scottish Enlightenment thought and values. The second part of this thesis will focus primarily on Smith's creation of a Princeton Enlightenment based on his system of moral education, his use of Scottish philosophy (particularly his treatment of the 'moral faculty'), and finally, his perspective of alleged counter-Enlightenment activities at Princeton and its effect on his system of moral education.

In the decades that followed the birth of America's new republic, Smith envisioned the dawn of an American didactic Enlightenment led by Princeton graduates.

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<sup>1</sup> At this time and afterwards, early Americans often referred to the College of New Jersey as Princeton after its location or 'Nassau' from its primary teaching building Nassau Hall. George Washington to George Washington Parke Custis, 23 July 1797, quoted in John Maclean Jr., *History of the College of New Jersey from its Origin in 1746 to the Commencement of 1854*, vol. two, (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1877), 146.

He believed that the ‘diffusion of knowledge is the diffusion of virtue and of freedom’.<sup>2</sup> This ambition built upon John Witherspoon’s earlier reforms of the curriculum between 1768 and 1776 that established the use of Scottish moral philosophy at Princeton. During this time, Witherspoon introduced Smith to the writings of Scottish moralists such as Francis Hutcheson, Thomas Reid, James Beattie, and, of course, his own moral philosophy. Smith’s devotion to Witherspoon, however, did not imply that his moral philosophy drew primarily from Witherspoon’s philosophy (which will be examined in the following chapter) or that Smith’s administration furthered Witherspoon’s concept of a so-called ‘republican Christian Enlightenment’. Mark Noll suggests that ‘on a formal level, Witherspoon was not a distinguished thinker [and] he made his reputation by linking up republicanism, Enlightenment science, and Calvinistic Christianity’.<sup>3</sup> Contrary to Witherspoon, the diffusion of Christian principles and republican ideals did not register as Smith’s paramount ambition for Princeton. Rather, he sought to rival Scottish and continental Enlightenments at Princeton through cultivating the mind and advancing ‘liberal science’.

Stanhope Smith’s commitment toward fulfilling these overlapping objectives demarcated a change in Princeton’s purpose from educating enlightened ministers toward preparing future statesmen for public service. According to Smith, ‘the sons of America...are not inferior in genius [and] the same advantages of cultivation for them to be capable of equal perfection [require] fortunate circumstances of their grooming up less shackled with the prejudices of antiquity to lead the array in the investigation of truth’.<sup>4</sup> For Smith, America’s future legislators, judges, clergymen, and educators who graduated

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Stanhope Smith to Benjamin Rush, 20 July 1783, Princeton University Library MS14429.

<sup>3</sup> Noll, *Princeton*, 294.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel Stanhope Smith to Benjamin Rush, 19 August 1787, PUL MS14428.

from Princeton would create an American Enlightenment through ‘moderate’ laws, enlightened policies, and as examples within their respective communities. To this desired effect, Smith suggested that an enlightened state of society developed when

genius, prompted by virtuous zeal and blessed with subservience, matures the system and recommends it to justice. To such studies and efforts the public owes more obligations than it is sensible by gradual advances and innumerable small impressions frequently repeated the public mind is brought to admit improvement. Civility of manners thus grows by degrees out of liberalism, knowledge out of ignorance; its just systems out of error... these rays of intellectual light tend at length to form the moral world, and approximate it towards perfection.<sup>5</sup>

Achieving this ambition, however, proved difficult for a variety of reasons: an increased religious hostility toward the teaching of metaphysics following the French Revolution, divisive party politics between Federalists and Republicans, and, above all, a religious campaign to revive Princeton’s tradition of training future clergymen. These factors contributed to Smith’s belief that counter-Enlightenment factions consisting of unruly students (identified by Smith as so-called ‘Jacobins’ who were distinct from French ‘Jacobins’) and religious revivalists existed. The extremist or radical principles of these separate groups convinced Smith that they opposed the ‘Moderate’ purpose of the Princeton Enlightenment. Despite Smith’s interpretation of these different factions, neither religious revivalists nor Princeton’s unruly students identified their actions as being part of a counter-Enlightenment movement. Before these later tensions, Smith invested considerable care in creating his programme of moral education as an engine for Enlightenment.

At this time, the aims of Princeton’s education were defined largely by the ideas taught in Smith’s lectures of moral philosophy. In doing so, Smith shared Witherspoon’s enthusiasm for Scottish moral philosophy and its tradition of advancing philosophical inquiries in a pedagogical context. Similar to the reasons why Dugald Stewart supported

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Stanhope Smith to Benjamin Rush, 27 August 1787, PUL MS14429.

the secular study of the arts and sciences, Smith believed that a properly regulated system of moral education refined manners, improved civility, and assisted in cultivating the ‘intellectual, active and moral powers of the mind’. In support of these possible results, Smith wrote shortly after being elected president that ‘the time is, I believe, now come or nearly so...that three entire years be employed in the different branches of art and science’.<sup>6</sup> Yet the circumstances in which Smith and Stewart taught demanded different considerations in preparing young men for public life. The different political, institutional, and religious contexts at Edinburgh and Princeton greatly affected how Stewart and Smith encouraged Enlightenment through their respective systems of moral education. How and why Smith created Enlightenment at Princeton is the focus of this chapter.

I first discuss how Smith, as the son of a religious revivalist, would later advocate Scottish ‘Moderate’ values, the significant role of religious revivalism at Princeton, and the importance of Witherspoon’s administration. Then I examine how Smith justified expanding ‘liberal science’ whilst Princeton’s seminary training declined. Finally, I explore how Smith’s reforms of the curriculum appealed to Scottish Enlightenment ideas and values in creating the Princeton Enlightenment. In the course of addressing these questions, this chapter argues that Smith’s system of moral education, as the basis for his wider reforms of the curriculum, testified to the existence of a new type of a Princeton Enlightenment.

### **From Revivalism to Common Sense: Smith’s connections to Princeton**

An explanation of the tensions between Samuel Stanhope Smith’s system of moral education and counter-Enlightenment factions must first consider Smith’s and

<sup>6</sup> Smith to Benjamin Rush, 1796, quoted in Thomas Jefferson Wertebaker, *Princeton, 1746-1896*, (PUP, 1946), 123.

Princeton's relationship with religious revivalism. From what little is known of Smith's life (born on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1751 at Pequea, Pennsylvania and died 19<sup>th</sup> March 1819 at Princeton, New Jersey), he displayed an intellectual curiosity that often caused conflict as he pursued philosophical truths. His biographer Fredrick Beasley wrote that even at a young age 'Smith made the best of his opportunities, and was distinguished for his improvement in every branch to which he directed his attention'.<sup>7</sup> His diverse interests in morals, theology, mathematics, history, poetry, metaphysics, political economy, *Belles Lettres* and natural sciences were useful for an administrator of liberal education. While his contributions to many of these fields remained amateur, Smith received the reputation 'as the most eloquent and learned divine among his contemporaries' by excelling in metaphysical philosophy and reforming Princeton's curriculum.<sup>8</sup> Yet Smith did not benefit from the same effects of an enlightened culture as Dugald Stewart's childhood education in Edinburgh. Smith's formative years between 1751 and 1766 were heavily influenced by the on-going religious controversy over the 'Great Awakening'.<sup>9</sup> Since these persistent religious tensions affected the founding and purpose of the College of New Jersey (which Smith's family and friends were centrally associated), a brief survey of these concerns suggests why his later adoption of Scottish 'Moderate' values (most notably his promotion of 'enlightened learning') and his use of Scottish philosophy was peculiar in light of his upbringing.

<sup>7</sup> Fredrick Beasley, 'An Account of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Samuel Stanhope Smith', *Analectic Magazine*, n.s., 1, (June 1820): 443.

<sup>8</sup> Philip Lindsley to Rev Dr Sprague, 2 February 1818, quoted in Maclean, *HCNJ*, 144.

<sup>9</sup> See Douglas Sweeney, 'Evangelical tradition in America', in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, edited by Stephen Stein, (CUP, 2007), 227-228.

In response to unprecedented crowds who gathered in a ‘revival of religion’ (later known as the ‘Great Awakening’) during the early 1740s,<sup>10</sup> the Synod of Philadelphia supporting orthodox Calvinistic views (Old Side) and the Synod of New York endorsing religious revivalism (New Side) effectively split American Presbyterianism.<sup>11</sup> Despite differing commercial and Protestant denominational divisions, Frank Lambert suggests that the thirteen American colonies ‘witnessed the same Spirit at work, the same sudden outburst of awakening, the same rapid spread of the revival, and the same effects on people’.<sup>12</sup> Of its leaders, George Whitefield’s ‘emotional’ sermons and interpretation of revelation resonated with the prominent American revivalists Jonathan Edwards, William Tennent Sr., Gilbert Tennent, Samuel Blair and later Robert Smith.<sup>13</sup> Their ‘emotional’ sermons emphasised a re-birth after accepting the ‘Spirit’ of Christ. For American revivalists, the ‘new birth’ signified the conversion experience of shedding a former life with the acceptance of ‘God’s Grace’ as an emotional and spiritual transformation.<sup>14</sup> Jonathan Edwards remarked that ‘natural men have not the Spirit; and Christ teaches the necessity of a new birth, or of being born of the Spirit, from this, that he that is born of the flesh, has only flesh, and no spirit’.<sup>15</sup> New Light ministers, consequently, maintained

<sup>10</sup> See Thomas Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The roots of evangelical Christianity in colonial America*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 43-47. Joseph Tracy among others popularised the characterization of the 1730-1740 American religious revivals as the ‘Great Awakening’ in the early 1840s. For information on the coining of this description see Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening: A history of the revival of religion in the time of Edwards and Whitefield*, (Boston: Charles Tappan, 1845). For the purpose of this chapter, I shall reference the 1730-1740s American religious revivals as the ‘Great Awakening’.

<sup>11</sup> See Marliyn Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity: Scots-Irish piety and the Great Awakening, 1625-1760*, (OUP, 1988), 15-30; Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys*, (Westmont, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Frank Lambert, *Inventing the “Great Awakening”*, (PUP, 1999), 4.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 93-125. The English Methodist preacher George Whitefield had a significant influence in creating the ‘Great Awakening’ during his seven tours of the thirteen colonies between 1739 and 1741.

<sup>14</sup> See Donald Harvey Meyer, *The Democratic Enlightenment*, (New York: Putnam, 1976), 23-38.

<sup>15</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, (Boston: Kneeland and Green, 1746), 114. For further reading on Edwards see Mark Noll, *America’s God: from Jonathan Edwards to*

that only ‘reborn’ ministers understood this ‘conversion experience’ and could properly guide a congregation toward their ‘new birth’.<sup>16</sup> In contrast, Old Light ministers were sceptical that the ‘conversion experience’ best conveyed the complexities of the Calvinist path toward salvation and (apart from their success in attracting new converts) New Light ministers were seen by them as lacking the necessary training to fulfil other important responsibilities of the ministry.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, the surge of religious revivals across British North America created a demand for more New Light ministers. From this demand, numerous Presbyterian academies (located mostly in the middle colonies) flourished in the wake of the 1740s ‘Great Awakening’.<sup>18</sup>

The emergence of Presbyterian academies modelled after William Tennent Sr.’s ‘Log College’ became a point of tension between the Old Side and New Side.<sup>19</sup> John Maclean Jr. later wrote that the ‘Log College’ focused more on

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*Abraham Lincoln*, (OUP, 2005); Wilson Kinnach, ‘Edwards as preacher,’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, edited by Stephen Stein, (CUP, 2007), 103-123; Harry Stout, ‘Edwards as revivalist,’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, edited by Stephen Stein, (CUP, 2007), 125-143.

<sup>16</sup> For further reading on how the Old Light and New Light theology differed see Amy Schragger Lang, ‘“A Flood of Errors”: Chauncy and Edwards in the Great Awakening’, in *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience*, edited by Nathan Hatch and Harry Stout, (OUP, 1988), 160-177. The revivalist John Blair remarked that ‘[i]n this New Birth, a man can only perceive the exercises of divine life in his heart, and by scriptural observations on these, infer what sort of life he lives, or form conclusions about its nature and principle’ (John Blair, ‘Observations on Regeneration,’ in *Sermons and Essays by the Tennents and their Contemporaries*, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1856), 192). For further reading on how the ‘Great Awakening’ reshaped the structure of religion in America see Timothy Hall, *Contested Boundaries: itinerancy and the reshaping of the Colonial American religious world*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994).

<sup>17</sup> Ned Landsman, *From Colonials to Provincials: American thought and culture, 1680-1760*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 120.

<sup>18</sup> Douglas Sloan, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1971), 36-72.

<sup>19</sup> The ‘Log College,’ established between 1726 and 1728 by William Tennent Sr. in Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, advanced American revivalist beliefs within Irish/Scottish Presbyterian academic models (Ibid., 41). In describing the ‘Log College,’ Whitefield remarked that ‘Mr. Tennent and his brethren in presbytery, intend breeding up gracious youths for our Lord’s vineyard. This place wherein the young men now study, is a log house, about twenty feet long, and nearly as many broad. From this despised place, seven or eight worthy ministers of Jesus have been sent forth, and a foundation is now laying for the instruction of many others’ (George Whitefield, *Journals*, 22 November 1739, in *Memoirs of Rev. George Whitefield*, edited by John Gillies, (New Haven: Joseph Barber, 1834), n43). Despite objections from Old



personal piety and religious experience, in candidates for the ministry, than of a complete knowledge of both their preparatory and their professional studies, [and] it is equally true that at this school the great benefits of mental discipline and of a familiar acquaintance with the several branches of philosophy and of polite learning were not estimated at their full value.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to conflicting opinions of the ‘conversion experience’, the absence of in-depth literary and philosophical training caused the Old Light ministers to devalue the curricula at these academies. This opinion was consistent with the belief that ministers should also serve as intellectual leaders of their respective congregation. As Henry May has shown ‘the minister was not only the best-educated man but the most in touch with the outside world’.<sup>21</sup> This Old Side and New Side controversy served as the backdrop of Stanhope Smith’s youthful years and the catalyst for the establishment of the College of New Jersey.

In response to the Old Light ministers’ opposition to ordaining graduates of Presbyterian academies, Gilbert Tennent and Jonathan Dickinson established the College of New Jersey from the foundations of the ‘Log College’. With New Jersey governor John Hamilton’s and King George II’s stamp of approval, the chartered College legitimised the training and ordination of New Light ministers.<sup>22</sup> William Armstrong Dod

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Light ministers, a number of academies followed the ‘Log College’ example: Samuel Blair’s Fagg’s Manor (established 1739), Samuel Finley’s Nottingham Academy (established 1744), and Robert Smith’s Pequea Academy (established 1750). Aaron Burr Sr. and Jonathan Dickinson also established lesser-known Presbyterian academies in New Jersey circa 1740 (Sloan, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal*, 281-282).

<sup>20</sup> Maclean, *HCNJ*, 30-1.

<sup>21</sup> Henry May, *The Enlightenment in America*, (OUP, 1976), 51.

<sup>22</sup> The College of New Jersey, chartered in 1746 from the approval of John Hamilton, marked the first instance of establishing an institution of higher education from the approval of a governor. The General Court of Massachusetts Bay with the consent of Massachusetts’ governor approved Harvard’s charter, Yale received approval from the General Assembly of Connecticut, and William and Mary’s charter was granted by King William (Maclean, *HCNJ*, 44; College of New Jersey Charter found at PUA MSAC120). Early accounts of the College illustrate how religion, particularly the tenets of revivalism, shaped its initial educational purpose. During a fund raising tour of Britain in 1754, Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Davies reported to potential patrons that their students exhibited ‘promising genius, Calvinistic principles, and in the judgement of charity, experimentally acquainted with the work of saving grace, and to have a distinguished zeal for the glory of God, and salvation of men’ (Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Davies to the Synod of New York, 25 October 1754, in *Records of the*

later wrote that ‘it cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the College of New Jersey is not only religious in its principles, but was the necessary and only possible product of religion’.<sup>23</sup> As a further testament to the College’s New Side attachments, its first five presidents [Jonathan Dickinson (1747), Aaron Burr, Sr. (1748-1757), Jonathan Edwards (1758), Samuel Davies (1759-1761), and Samuel Finley (1761-1766)] first made their reputations as revivalists. Samuel Monk suggests that ‘the homogeneity of the Presbyterian community into which he [Smith] was born accounts for the apparent inbreeding which connected him by blood or by association with the men who founded the college or who guided it throughout its first half-century’.<sup>24</sup> For example, Smith’s maternal grandfather Samuel Blair Sr. served as one of the College’s founding trustees. His father, Robert Smith (the son of a Presbyterian minister who emigrated from Ireland), married Blair’s daughter Elizabeth and later established the Pequea Academy (1750).<sup>25</sup> Afterwards, Robert Smith and his youngest son (John) served on Princeton’s Board of Trustees. In addition to his family’s service as trustees, his father was a close friend of Samuel Davies (College president 1759-1761) who was taught by his maternal grandfather at Fagg’s Manor; Samuel Finley (College president 1761-1766) baptised Stanhope Smith; his maternal uncle Samuel Blair Jr. was the interim College president (1766-1768); and John Witherspoon (College president 1768-1794) would later become his father-in-law in 1775. These connections certainly influenced Smith’s decision to

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*Presbyterian Church*, 264). As Bryan LeBeau has shown ‘approximately 63 percent of the Presbyterian ministers who entered the Synod of Philadelphia had been educated abroad [and] another 28 percent had graduated from New England colleges’ (Bryan LeBeau, *Jonathan Dickinson and the Formative Years of American Presbyterianism*, (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 165). The College of New Jersey was meant to offer seminary training for future American clergymen.

<sup>23</sup> William Armstrong Dod, *History of the College of New Jersey: from its commencement, A.D., 1746 to 1783*, (PUP, 1844), 2.

<sup>24</sup> Samuel Holt Monk, ‘Samuel Stanhope Smith (1751-1812): Friend of Rational Liberty’, in *The Lives of Eighteen from Princeton*, edited by William Thorp, (PUP, 1946), 86.

<sup>25</sup> See Jacob Beam, ‘Dr. Robert Smith’s Academy at Pequea, Pennsylvania’, *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society*, 8, (1915): 145-161.

continue his seminary preparation at the College of New Jersey after graduating from Pequea Academy in 1766 and later provided significant advantages in his academic career as a student (1766-1769), tutor (1771-1773), professor (1779-1812), vice-president (1786-1794), and president (1795-1812) at Princeton.<sup>26</sup>

Despite the gradual reunification of the Synods of Philadelphia and New York between 1752 and 1758, lingering divisions persisted concerning the religious purpose of the College of New Jersey. After the death of President Samuel Finley in 1766, the Princeton trustees sought to bridge the gap between the New Side and Old Side divisions with the appointment of a new president.<sup>27</sup> The decision to elect John Witherspoon on 19<sup>th</sup> November 1766 (who as an Evangelical minister achieved earlier fame in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland) appeared agreeable to both Old and New Light ministers since he did not participate in the earlier ecclesiastical schism and valued enlightened education.<sup>28</sup> The trustees' persistence persuaded Witherspoon and, more importantly Rush implied, his wife to accept this opportunity.<sup>29</sup> Witherspoon's election dawned a new age of learning at Princeton that included Scottish Enlightenment ideas and values.

<sup>26</sup> Smith's mastery of Latin and Greek under his training at his father's Pequea Academy permitted him to enter Princeton's junior class at the age of sixteen. After the graduating class of 1769, entering students were required to complete all four years of study at Princeton (Princeton's Board of Trustees Minutes, vol. 1, PUA AC120, College mandate on 30 September 1767, 134-40). Henceforth the Board of Trustee Minutes will be referred to as TM.

<sup>27</sup> See Jonathan Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights, 1750-1790*, (OUP, 2011), 468.

<sup>28</sup> TM, 128. The Board were probably made aware of Witherspoon's accomplishments from the Scottish connections that Davies and Tennent established during their earlier fund raising tour of Britain in 1754.

<sup>29</sup> Despite the best efforts of Benjamin Rush (Princeton class of 1760 and then Edinburgh University medical student from 1766 to 1769), Witherspoon declined Princeton's offer (Rush to Witherspoon, 15 December 1767, PUL Witherspoon Collection C0274). Instead of appointing Francis Alison (an Old Light minister and vice-president of the College of Philadelphia) who desired the office, the Trustees offered the presidency to Stanhope Smith's maternal uncle Samuel Blair on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1767 who was at the time Princeton's interim president (TM, 141). But the 26 year-old Princeton graduate (class of 1760) and minister of Old South Boston Church also declined the permanent office. Upon the urging of the Trustees, Rush once again met with Witherspoon and his wife in December 1767 and convinced them to reconsider Princeton.

On 17<sup>th</sup> August 1768, Witherspoon arrived at Princeton and established what would become the tone of his administration with a ‘Latin inaugural address on the union of Piety and Science’.<sup>30</sup> Witherspoon reformed Princeton’s curriculum to reflect his value of practical knowledge that strengthened the union of reason and revealed religion. He claimed that ‘if the Scripture is true, the discoveries of reason cannot be contrary to it’.<sup>31</sup> Upon his arrival at Princeton Witherspoon observed colonial hostility toward British imperial policies, particularly mounting concerns over taxation.<sup>32</sup> In the decades that followed, this dissatisfaction with British rule developed into revolutionary principles, which considerably influenced the experience of a Princeton education. For example, Witherspoon’s lectures of moral philosophy, sermons at Princeton, and political pamphlets leading up to and during the American Revolution advanced his commitment

<sup>30</sup> The Trustee Minutes did not record a ceremony that welcomed Witherspoon, but Ashbel Green’s later research on Witherspoon’s manuscripts found evidence of the subject of Witherspoon’s address that he delivered during his first meeting with the Board of Trustees and students (Maclean, *HCNJ*, 300).

<sup>31</sup> John Witherspoon, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, edited by Ashbel Green, (Philadelphia: William Woodward, 1822), 21. This revised edition of Witherspoon’s lectures denoted areas that Green emphasised during his later presidency of Princeton. Green’s interpretation of Witherspoon’s moral thought had a central role in Smith’s tensions with religious revivalists. At the heart of this conflict was Green’s belief that Smith perverted Witherspoon’s legacy and misinterpreted his moral philosophy. Since this context has a bearing on the scope of this examination (which will be discussed in the following chapters), I shall reference this edition in discussing Witherspoon’s lectures of moral philosophy.

<sup>32</sup> Upon Witherspoon’s 1768 arrival, colonial Americans resisted British taxes, the continued presence of British troops (mostly in Boston), and reasserted their perceived identity and rights within the British Empire (Edmund Morgan, *The Birth of the Republic 1763-89*, revised edition, (University of Chicago Press, 1977), 14-41). The College of New Jersey’s previous connections with the ‘Great Awakening,’ which challenged the authority of established religious institutions, contributed to the Princetonians’ defiance against British authority (Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, (HUP, 1992), 249). The Battle of Princeton on 3 January 1777 wrought havoc on Princeton’s campus and the decline in students during the war jeopardised the survival of College (Ford Henry Jones, *The Scotch-Irish in America*, (PUP, 1915), 447-8). During the battle, Nassau Hall, Princeton’s edifice, served as barracks for British soldiers, which received a direct assault by the Continental army led by Hugh Mercer. As a result, ‘the inside of the church, as well as of the College edifice, was destroyed by the British and American armies’ (Maclean, *HCNJ*, 265). Of the four courses Witherspoon taught, only his notes on moral philosophy and eloquence survived the pillaging of British soldiers and the burning of his manuscripts by his second wife (Gordon Tait, *The Piety of John Witherspoon: Pew, Pulpit and Public Forum*, (Louisville: Geneva Press, 2001), xvii).

toward realising American political independence.<sup>33</sup> In addition to these political concerns, Witherspoon reformed the curriculum after his earlier experiences as a graduate of Edinburgh University where he counted prominent ‘Moderates’ (William Robertson and Hugh Blair) as classmates.<sup>34</sup> Despite his earlier opposition to the Moderate party in the Church of Scotland and in print, he endorsed central ‘Moderate’ beliefs at Princeton.<sup>35</sup> In this selective appeal to Scottish ‘Moderate’ values, Witherspoon remarked to the 1775 graduating class that

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<sup>33</sup> Two months before signing the American Declaration of Independence, Witherspoon preached to his students ‘that all the disorderly passions of men, whether exposing the innocent to private injury or whether they are the arrows of divine judgment in public calamity, shall in the end, be to the praise of God: Or, to apply it more particularly to the present state of the American Colonies, and the plague of war,--The ambition of mistaken princes, the cunning and cruelty of oppressive and corrupt ministers, and even the inhumanity of brutal soldiers, however dreadful, shall finally promote the glory of God, and in the meantime, while the storm continues, his mercy and kindness shall appear in prescribing bounds to their rage and fury...I leave this as a matter of conjecture than certainty; but observe, that if your cause is just,--if your principles are pure,--and if your conduct is prudent, you need not fear the multitude of opposing hosts’ (John Witherspoon, ‘The dominion of Providence over the passions of men,’ sermon at Princeton on 17 May 1776, second edition, (Philadelphia and Glasgow, 1777), 9, 28). His political sermons also assisted in claiming Providence on the side of the American revolutionary cause and in redirecting the American resistance to Imperial economic encroachment, exemplified in the Stamp Act (1765), Townshend Acts (1767), and the Intolerable or Coercive Acts (1774), to a question of rightful sovereignty. For further reading on the Stamp Act, Townshend Acts, and Coercive Acts see Francis Cogliano, *Revolutionary America, 1763-1815: A political history*, (London: Routledge, 2000), chapters one and two. For further reading on Witherspoon’s politics see Jeffrey Morrison, *John Witherspoon and the Founding of the American Republic*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007); Scott Segrest, *America and the Political Philosophy of Common Sense*, (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> Witherspoon’s curriculum was as follows. The first year of study involved studying Greek Testament, Sallust, Lucian, Cicero, and Mair’s Introduction to Latin Syntax. In the second year, students studied Xenophon, Cicero, Homer, Horace, Roman Antiquities, Geography, Arithmetic, English Grammar and Composition. The third year students studied algebra, geometry, trigonometry, practical geometry, conic sections, natural philosophy, and English grammar and composition. In the final year, students studied natural and moral philosophy, criticism, chronology (history), logic, and the classics (Maclean, *History*, 367). In addition to teaching moral philosophy, Witherspoon lectured on Chronology (history), Eloquence, and Divinity. He also established a preparatory school attached to Princeton that taught the rudiments of composition, Latin, Greek, and mathematics. This school permitted Witherspoon to instruct more advanced lessons as students commenced their studies at Princeton. In reference to Princeton’s preparatory school, Witherspoon remarked that ‘in the College the Trustees chuse [sic] the Teachers and make the Laws and the faculty execute them. In the School I have the Sole Right of chusing [sic] the Teachers and directing everything that is done in it. We are obliged to contend against the Prejudices of the Times which are much against the ancient Languages menacing particularly the Latin and Greek. Yet these are plainly the fountains both of Science and History as well as they furnish us with the Standard of Taste’ (Witherspoon to George Tucker, 1 May 1787, PUL MS 2001-49).

<sup>35</sup> See Thomas Ahnert, ‘Clergymen as polite philosophers: Douglas and the conflict between Moderates and Orthodox in the Scottish Enlightenment’, *Intellectual History Review*, 18:3, (2008): 375-383. For further reading on Witherspoon’s satirical attack against Moderate clergymen see John Witherspoon, *Ecclesiastical Characteristics: of, the Arcana of Church Policy*, (Edinburgh, 1753).

It hath been generally a favourite point with me, to recommend the union of piety and literature, and to guard young persons against the opposite extremes. We see sometimes the pride of unsanctified knowledge do great injury to religion; and on the other hand, we find some persons of real piety, despising human learning, and disgracing the most glorious truths, by a meanness and indecency hardly sufferable in their manner of handling them. On this account, industry and application to study is of the utmost importance to those who are intended for the office of the ministry.<sup>36</sup>

Witherspoon's use of 'Moderate' values in reforming Princeton's curriculum did not imply he attempted to replicate the 'Moderates' of Edinburgh's example or that he adopted every 'Moderate' belief. As he indicated, only some 'Moderate' beliefs were applicable in 'the office of the ministry'.<sup>37</sup> While the Revolution wrought havoc on the campus, reduced the student population, and for a brief period between 1777 and 1779 suspended classes, his paramount concern at Princeton was educating enlightened ministers, albeit interrupted by the circumstances of war and the interests of nation building. Princeton's institutional purpose under Witherspoon would later prove important to how Smith's system was received amongst conservative Evangelicals.

As Witherspoon's first presidential order, he removed George Berkeley's philosophy from the curriculum and reformed the College with an emphasis on modern Scottish philosophical writings. According to Philip Lindsley, 'when Dr. Witherspoon arrived from Scotland, he brought with him the works of several distinguished Scottish philosophical writers, particularly Reid and Beattie'.<sup>38</sup> Joseph Periam, then professor of mathematics and natural philosophy, was said to be 'one of the zealous adherents that Bishop Berkeley's idealism had found in America, and under his influence [Stanhope]

<sup>36</sup> John Witherspoon, 'An Address to the Students of the Senior Class at the 23 September 1775 Princeton Commencement', in *The Works of Rev. John Witherspoon*, edited by Samuel Stanhope Smith, second edition, vol. three, (Philadelphia: Woodward, 1802), 105.

<sup>37</sup> On how Witherspoon's administration (particularly during the American Revolution) selectively drew from Scottish influences see Gideon Mailer, 'Anglo-Scottish Union and John Witherspoon's American Revolution', *WMQ*, 67:4, (Oct., 2010): 709-746.

<sup>38</sup> Phillip Lindsley, 'Samuel Stanhope Smith, D.D., LLD', in *Annals of the American Pulpit from the early settlement of the country to the close of the year eighteen hundred and fifty-five*, edited by William Sprague, (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1859), 3:336.



Smith adopted Berkeley's philosophy'.<sup>39</sup> Berkeley's 'immaterialism' was believed to support natural religion by suggesting that God implanted ideas of the external world in the mind and the external world existed as a reflection (albeit often accurate) of the mind.<sup>40</sup> In theory, this permitted avoiding the distractions of the external world as a way to better understand God's revealed truths and avoid material vices. Witherspoon commented that 'the immaterial system is a wild and ridiculous attempt to unsettle the principles of common sense by metaphysical reasoning, which can hardly produce anything but contempt in the generality of persons who hear it'.<sup>41</sup> In the short period between 1768 and 1769, Witherspoon convinced Smith of the merits of Scottish moralists and introduced him to selective Scottish 'Moderate' values whilst not completely overturning his earlier opposition to the 'Moderates' of Edinburgh.<sup>42</sup> In doing so, he drew heavily from theorists associated with the so-called Scottish School of Common Sense.

Witherspoon taught:

Some late writers have advanced with great apparent reason, that there are certain *first principles* of dictates of *common sense*, which are either simple perceptions, or seen with intuitive evidence. These are the *foundation* of all reasoning, and without them, to reason is a word without a meaning.<sup>43</sup>

Like James Beattie (professor of moral philosophy at Marischal College, Aberdeen University from 1760 to 1803), Witherspoon's support of Reid's 'principles of common sense' traced a closer link between Scripture and faculties of the mind than Reid had

<sup>39</sup> Monk, 'Samuel Stanhope Smith', 89.

<sup>40</sup> Berkeley wrote 'that if we have any knowledge at all of external things, it must be by reason, inferring their existence from what is immediately perceived by sense' (George Berkeley, *The Works of George Berkeley*, vol. one, (London: Richard Priestly, 1820), 31).

<sup>41</sup> Witherspoon, *Lectures*, 21.

<sup>42</sup> Despite Smith's earlier acceptance of Berkeley's system, 'under the more practical view of things presented by Dr. Witherspoon in his lectures on Moral Philosophy, he embraced the opinions of his new preceptor' (Maclean, *HCNJ*, 404).

<sup>43</sup> Witherspoon, *Lectures*, 50.

intended in his lectures and *Inquiry* (1764).<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, Noll has alluded to a rivalry between Witherspoon and Reid regarding who conceived this philosophical approach.<sup>45</sup> Witherspoon taught ‘that the whole of Scripture is perfectly agreeable to sound philosophy; yet certainly it was never intended to teach us everything’.<sup>46</sup> He was certainly conscious of Princeton’s religious tradition and recognised that the teaching of morals independent of revelation would likely generate controversy at a New Light seminary. Without committing to Reid’s views on natural religion, he taught Francis Hutcheson’s theory that ‘the moral sense implies also a sense of obligation, that such things are right and others wrong; that we are bound in duty to the one, and that our conduct is hateful, blameable, and deserving of punishment, if we do the contrary’.<sup>47</sup> While he praised the earlier ideas of his countrymen, he guarded against tension with religious orthodoxy by not offering new insights or detailed discussions of controversial metaphysical themes. He warned his students that ‘it is easy to raise metaphysical subtleties, and confound the understanding on such subjects’.<sup>48</sup> Witherspoon, therefore, implied an agreement with particular philosophical themes in Scottish philosophy and its methodology whilst not confining his opinion to these ideas. His moral philosophy did not vacillate between the

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<sup>44</sup> James Beattie joined Reid as a member of the Aberdeen Philosophical Society also known as the ‘Wise Club’ in 1760. He was best known for his writings in support of the abolition of human slavery. As a Presbyterian divine, his moral thought incorporated a closer link with Scripture than Reid had attempted at that time. Beattie wrote that ‘it is indeed impossible to understand the doctrines of our religion, and not to *wish at least* that they may be true: for they exhibit the most comfortable views of God and his providence; they recommend the purest and most perfect morality; and they breathe nothing throughout, but benevolence, equity, and peace. And one may venture to affirm, that no man ever *wished* the gospel to be true, who did not *find* it so’ (James Beattie, *Elements of Moral Science*, vol. one, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1790), 1:402-403).

<sup>45</sup> Noll, *Princeton and the Republic*, 189. Yet no evidence has surfaced that Reid defended his ideas against Witherspoon’s claim that his ideas on this system predated Reid’s *Inquiry*. See John Witherspoon, ‘Remarkd on an Essay on Human Liberty’, *The Scots Magazine*, 15, (1753): 165-170.

<sup>46</sup> Witherspoon, *Lectures*, 7.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.



merit and demerit of metaphysics but rather did not engage in its treatment as his Scottish contemporaries, such as Reid, attempted. He justified his brief discussion of metaphysicians by claiming that ‘I do not know anything that serves more for the support of religion than to see, from the different and opposite systems of philosophers, that there is nothing certain in their schemes, but what is coincident with the word of God’.<sup>49</sup>

Stanhope Smith, however, was far less guarded than Witherspoon in his later use of Scottish philosophy.

Smith excelled in his studies at Princeton and graduated valedictorian in 1769 at the first commencement of Witherspoon’s presidency.<sup>50</sup> After graduation Smith continued his seminary training with his father at Pequea Academy. At that time, Smith continued his interest in ‘polite’ literature through the writings of Addison, Pope, and Swift as well as expanding his knowledge of philosophy and divinity with a particular interest in Locke, Butler and Edwards. Smith returned to Princeton the following year to complete his divinity studies with Witherspoon where he remained as a tutor of Belles-Lettres until 1773. Shortly after receiving a license to preach by the presbytery of New Castel in Pennsylvania, Smith contracted tuberculosis, which he struggled with until his death in 1819.<sup>51</sup> Consequently, Smith relocated to Virginia as a missionary where the

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>50</sup> James Madison, then a Princeton student, commented that ‘the head oration, which is always given to the greatest scholar by the President and Tutors, was pronounced in Latin by Mr. Samuel Smith’ (James Madison, *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison*, vol. one, (Philadelphia: Lippencott, 1865), 2). See Ralph Ketcham, ‘James Madison at Princeton’, *PULC*, 28, (1966): 24-54.

<sup>51</sup> Smith was known to carry a bloodletting kit with him to use when he felt the symptoms of his tuberculosis worsening and the passage of the symptoms persuaded him of its medical merit as a form of treatment. On one occasion, Smith informed Rush that he drained ‘20 oz of blood’ from a student who suffered from a high fever and delirium caused by yellow fever. He reported that the student’s high pulse rate lessened as a result of the bloodletting, which certainly resulted from the loss of blood (Smith to Rush on 7 November (year unknown). PUL MS14429). This episode probably occurred around the yellow fever epidemic between 1793 and 1794. Smith’s interest in treating yellow fever became more personal when he lost his wife to the disease on 19 October 1793. Furthermore, Rush shared Smith’s reaction to the loss of his wife as an example of grieving in his treatise on yellow fever (Benjamin Rush, *Medical Inquires and Observations*, vol. three, second edition, (Philadelphia: Conrad and Co., 1805), 307).

climate was thought more agreeable to his condition.<sup>52</sup> In Virginia, Smith followed his father's and maternal grandfather's earlier example by establishing the 'Prince Edward Academy' in 1774. After receiving a favourable response in its first year the Academy expanded the following year under the name Hampden-Sydney College.<sup>53</sup> But this institution did not conform to the Presbyterian academy paradigm. As Hampden-Sydney's founding president, Smith encouraged the refinement of 'polite' taste and philosophy and modelled the curriculum after Witherspoon's Princeton.<sup>54</sup> He also promoted a student militia (led by his younger brother John who graduated from Princeton in 1773) whose members joined many Princeton students as officers and soldiers in the Continental army.<sup>55</sup> In his final year as president of Hampden-Sydney in 1778, Smith pondered the powers of the mind and, in particular, expressed an interest in the theme of 'causation'. In a letter to James Madison, Smith wrote:

You have frequently attacked me on that knotty question of liberty and necessity that has so much embarrassed philosophers, and has raised such furious war among divines. I have lately had occasion to write on philosophical subjects, and among others, on this question. I have read over your objections against the doctrine of moral liberty, for practically you seem to be one of its disciples. I remember the manner in which you have formerly expressed yourself upon that intricate subject; and, indeed, that express the difficulties that occurred to me in attempting to solve it.<sup>56</sup>

Smith's previous letter that he referenced has yet to surface, but his response indicates that he held similar ideas as Reid on the theme of 'causation' more than a decade before the publication of Thomas Reid's *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* (1788). Over the following decades, Smith developed these ideas and later applied them as central to his

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<sup>52</sup> Noll, *Princeton*, 68.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> See E.T. Crowson, 'Samuel Stanhope Smith: A Founder of Hampden-Sydney College', *Virginia Cavalcade*, 24, (Autumn 1974): 53-60.

<sup>55</sup> Noll, *Princeton*, 68.

<sup>56</sup> Madison, *Life*, 187-188.

moral philosophy. His pursuits of the mind did not retreat from the realities of war that nearly ruined his alma mater in the Battle of Princeton (1777). Upon the urging of Witherspoon, Smith left Hampden-Sydney to the care of his brother and returned to salvage a decimated Princeton in 1779.

As a signer of the Declaration of Independence and member of the Second Continental Congress (1776-1782), Witherspoon could not regularly attend to the College repairs and lectures for fear of British arrest. In turn, he required someone to conduct College affairs in his absence. With his sons serving in the Continental army, Witherspoon entrusted these responsibilities to Smith (whose struggle with tuberculosis prevented him from military service). On 29<sup>th</sup> September 1779, the Board of Trustees (including Robert Smith) elected Stanhope Smith as professor of ‘Moral Philosophy and Metaphysics’.<sup>57</sup> Since this appointment greatly reduced Witherspoon’s teaching responsibilities, he offered ‘at the same time to resign to him one half of his own salary’.<sup>58</sup> For the remainder of Witherspoon’s administration, Smith absorbed more and more of his administrative and teaching responsibilities as Witherspoon’s eyesight worsened until he finally succumbed to blindness. For example, Smith took an active role in circulating letters to alumni soliciting funds for College repairs and a replacement for the damaged scientific apparatus (the Rittenhouse orrery).<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, the trustees enlarged Smith’s responsibilities on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1783 by appointing him as the professor of the divinity and later officially electing him vice-president on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1786 (though he performed the tasks of this office since his 1779 return).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> TM, 29 September 1779, 222.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 222-3.

<sup>59</sup> Smith to Rev Dr. Sproat in 1790, PUL MS9626. It was said that British and Continental soldiers absconded with pieces of the Rittenhouse orrery after the Battle of Princeton.

<sup>60</sup> Trustee meeting on 22 October 1783, 240-242. By 1784, Smith’s lectures on divinity replaced Albert Schultens’ publications on Hebrew grammar with Rev Robertson’s texts (Smith to Robertson on 24

During the decline of the Articles of Confederation, Smith and Witherspoon joined the Federalist cause in the Federalist and Anti-Federalist debates between 1787 and 1788. Once again, national politics were central to the thought and ideals at Princeton. The demands of lecturing and to a significant degree the administration of the College during the final decade of the Witherspoon administration did not prevent Smith from furthering his philosophical interests. Philadelphia's American Philosophical Society served as an ideal forum for Smith to test his ideas amongst prominent members of America's scientific community. As Nina Reid-Maroney suggests, the 'Philadelphia circle' explored how modern philosophy could serve the interests of religion and social improvement.<sup>61</sup> On 28<sup>th</sup> January 1787, Smith joined the American Philosophical Society and read *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species* at his first meeting. In this essay, Smith defended biblical monogenesis (the belief that everyone descended from Adam and Eve); he advanced this defence, however, with a union of metaphysics and 'true religion' (which he described as the reading of the Gospels free of secondary interpretations). This philosophical discussion on the origin of the human species and reasons for the diversity of races received much attention in the international Republic of Letters.<sup>62</sup> Smith's treatment of this controversial subject addressed earlier ideas of eminent philosophers such as George-Louis Comte de Buffon and Henry Home Lord Kames and later had a place in his system of moral education. A review of his ideas on this subject therefore reveals an abolitionist agenda attached to his moral programme.

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November 1784, PUL C0028). In the same meeting that appointed Smith as vice-president, the Board conferred an honorary doctorate in divinity to Robert Smith (TM, 27 September 1786, 258-60).

<sup>61</sup> Nina Reid-Maroney, *Philadelphia's Enlightenment, 1740-1800: Kingdom of Christ, Empire of Reason*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press, 2001), 161-182.

<sup>62</sup> For further reading on the monogenist and polygenist debate see Colin Kidd, *Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600-2000*, (CUP, 2006), 104-105.

Like Witherspoon in his earlier criticism of Lord Kames, Smith addressed Kames's defence of polygenesis expressed in *Sketches* (1774). According to Kames, 'the colour of the Negroes...affords a strong presumption of their being a different species from the Whites [but] who can say how far they might improve in a state of freedom, were they obliged like Europeans, to procure bread with the sweat of their brows?'<sup>63</sup> Yet he noted that slaves in Jamaica, who could use Sundays for acquiring means of sustenance, lived on a par 'if not better' than free 'Negroes'.<sup>64</sup> Kames offered examples of the industriousness and civility exhibited by 'Negroes' who lived in the Gold Coast of Africa; he attributed this success, however, to the influence of the 'Hindows', a mixed race of European and African descent, who, he implied, were a superior species to 'Negroes'.<sup>65</sup> While he received £1,000 for this work (his publisher William Creech also published Dugald Stewart's writings) and sold enough copies for subsequent editions, his pro-slavery remarks received criticism from abolitionists.<sup>66</sup> Of these critics, James Beattie remarked that 'all history proves, and every rational philosopher admits, that, as liberty promotes virtue and genius, slavery debases the understanding, and corrupts the heart, of both the slave, and the master'.<sup>67</sup> Despite this later backlash, Kames and his friends appeared optimistic of its philosophical reception.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man*, vol. two, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1778), 64-65.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>66</sup> Richard Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors & Their Publishers in Eighteenth-century Britain, Ireland, & America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 82-83.

<sup>67</sup> James Beattie, *Elements of Moral Science*, second edition, vol. two, (Edinburgh: Creech, 1807), 44.

<sup>68</sup> William Smellie, a natural philosopher and friend of Lord Kames, wrote on that 'I hope your Lordships example will give an effectual check to those mystical, I might say, those nonsensical writers on human nature, who involve themselves in clouds of obscurity, and expect their readers to understand what they themselves cannot explain' (William Smellie to Kames, 23 April 1774, in *Memoirs of the Life, Writings and Correspondence of W. Smellie*, edited by Robert Kerr, (Edinburgh: John Anderson, 1811), 354).

Across the Atlantic, contrary views on either side of this philosophical debate assumed a different meaning as Americans considered the future of their infant nation. Since America's chief source of economic prosperity relied heavily upon the slave labour of the plantation system, the monogenesis-polygenesis debate raised serious questions about America's continued practise of slavery and its moral and economic consequences. As an ardent slavery abolitionist and Presbyterian divine, Smith challenged the belief that the Bible justified the institution of slavery.<sup>69</sup> Instead of conforming to the post-revolutionary Edwardsean tradition of opposing slavery through Evangelical conversion, Smith's stance mingled natural and moral philosophy with theology.<sup>70</sup> In his APS essay Smith appealed to the writings of Buffon by accounting for the diversity within the human race as the product of diverse climates.<sup>71</sup> For Smith, climates affected the human complexion and figure gradually over time. Smith argued:

In every position suffering the influences of the climate, of the sterility or richness of the soil, of the elevation or depression of the face of their country, of the vicinity of seas or deserts, of their insular, or continental situation: or the modifications of all these, resulting from their occupations, and their habits of living. Hence they now

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<sup>69</sup> As Mark Noll has shown, a prominent pro-slavery argument drew evidence from selective Biblical quotes (Mark Noll, *America's God*, (OUP, 2002), 17). By debunking these arguments with a contrary interpretation of the Bible, Smith advanced why human 'bondage' was inconsistent with the word of God.

<sup>70</sup> See Kenneth Minkema and Harry Stout, 'The Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate, 1740-1865', *The Journal of American History*, 92:1, (June 2005): 61-72.

<sup>71</sup> Buffon, a French naturalist, mathematician, and encyclopaedist, explored the diversity of the natural world and human nature. In *Histoire Naturelle*, Buffon discussed the reasons for the physical differences of various animal species and often categorised them in relation to humankind as one distinctive species. Buffon argued that 'man constitutes but one and the same species, and, though this species is perhaps more numerous, inconstant and irregular in all its actions, yet the prodigious diversity of nourishment, climate, and so many other combinations as may be supposed, have not produced beings different enough from each other to constitute new species, and at the same time so like ourselves, that we are not able to deny but that we are of the same race' (Georges Louis Buffon, *Barr's Buffon: Buffon's Natural History*, translated into English by James Smith Barr, (London, 1792), 191). Buffon justified this point with the observation that 'Whites' and 'Negros' were able to procreate and possessed the universal ability of communication between 'all' varieties of man (Ibid). Smith agreed with Buffon's criterion of procreation as an acceptable qualification for categorising species, however, he devised a metaphysical explanation for the diversity within the human species (Samuel Stanhope Smith, *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species*, (New Brunswick: J. Simpson and Co., 1810), 13).

present to the eye an almost infinite variety in their complexion, their form and features, and their whole personal aspect.<sup>72</sup>

By suggesting that everyone originated from one source (Adam and Eve) and that different climates, education, and living conditions were the cause of the diversity among races, Smith's theory challenged the institution of slavery. Moreover, he argued that God implanted humankind with powers of the mind to advance from savage states of society, and the continued practise of 'human bondage' impeded God's design.<sup>73</sup> Smith's theory, therefore, supported the creation of a republic that would not be economically dependent upon slave labour. This idea proved somewhat controversial at Princeton. While slavery was being abolished across the North at this time and was under siege with the passing of Manumission laws (as a legal way to free slaves who could prove their self-sufficiency), proponents of slavery persisted amongst the student population as well as from prominent men in New Jersey.<sup>74</sup> Yet Smith measured the success of his *Essay* from its Edinburgh reception, in particular, its praise from Dugald Stewart.<sup>75</sup> Despite his later

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<sup>72</sup> Smith, *Essay*, 32-33.

<sup>73</sup> Smith suggested that 'manners, education, habits of living, and all those causes comprehended under the general head of *the state of society*, have a powerful operation in preserving, and augmenting, or in guarding against the impressions of climate, and in modifying the whole appearance of the human person and countenance (Ibid., 240-241). This argument was later supported by the case of Henry Moss. Benjamin Rush, a contributing member of the American Philosophical Society, also investigated racial connections within the monogenesis-polygenesis debate. Rush advanced his ideas on race within his 1805 publication of *Medical Inquiries and Observations* where he concluded that blackness of skin was not an innate phenomena but a form of enduring leprosy (Rush, *Medical Inquiries and Observations*, 1-59; also see Kidd, *The Forging of Race*, 109). Rush's theory gained some levels of credit with the emergence of the curious case of Henry Moss. In 1792 at the age of 38, Henry Moss's complexion changed from black to white. During a visit to Philadelphia, Moss met with a mystified George Washington and members of the APS, including Smith, who pondered the implications of this transformation. Smith later remarked 'that, in his appearance, he could not be distinguished from a native Anglo-American' (Smith, *Essay*, n94).

<sup>74</sup> See Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A history of African-American slaves*, (HUP, 2003), 82; Benjamin J. Klebaner, 'American Manumission Laws and the Responsibility for Supporting Slaves', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 63:4, (Oct., 1955): 443-453.

<sup>75</sup> In a letter to William Robertson on 24 November 1784, Smith commented 'I should be happy to correspond with any of the gentlemen of distinguished literary reputation of your acquaintance in Edinburgh' (Smith to Reverend Dr. William Robertson, 24 November 1784, PUL C0028). It is unclear if Robertson was in fact Principal Robertson of Edinburgh University, but Witherspoon who personally knew Principal Robertson had facilitated Smith's connection with the Rev Robertson of this letter who



accomplishments at Princeton, Smith wrote to Ashbel Green in 1818 that he was most proud of Stewart's approval of his *Essay*.<sup>76</sup> Not only did Stewart read the 1788 Edinburgh edition of Smith's *Essay*, but he also applied Smith's theory in his lectures on moral philosophy the following year.<sup>77</sup> This anecdotal connection between Smith's and Stewart's moral thought was not their strongest link. Like Stewart, Smith drew heavily from Reid's philosophy in creating a programme of moral education. Their efforts to diffuse and later defend these respective systems of moral education against counter-Enlightenment interests demonstrated their shared purpose in the Atlantic World.

### **Creating Enlightenment at Princeton: Smith's system of moral education**

In creating his system of moral education, Stanhope Smith established the foundations of what would become a new type of Princeton Enlightenment. The death of John Witherspoon on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1794 who introduced Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy to Princeton did not mean that these ideas declined after his passing. As Witherspoon's successor appointed on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1795, Smith ushered in an age of scientific and literary advancement previously unknown at Princeton.<sup>78</sup> Within his first year as president, Smith illustrated his vision for Princeton in petitioning support from the New Jersey Legislature. In this 1796 'memorial', Smith wrote that 'in the present age,

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was believed to have connections with Edinburgh's *literati*. Nevertheless, Smith actively sought connections with Edinburgh theorists whom he held in a high regard.

<sup>76</sup> Smith to Green, February 1818, PUL C0028.

<sup>77</sup> In 1789, Stewart appealed to Smith's theory in teaching that 'the effects which Climate and situation have upon the human body are produced but very slowly. They are scarcely observable the first generation and even the next race they are not much observable. Dr Smith mentions an Indian who was placed as a student at the university, where the Dr was, at the same age of 15 & who gradually as he advanced with his studies became more like even influence to his fellow students, tho [sic] not so much so, as he would have done had he been placed there at an earlier period of Life' (Dugald Stewart, Lectures on Moral Philosophy 1789-1790, taken by an unknown student, EUL MS Gen. 1987-9, 12).

<sup>78</sup> Smith's governance of College affairs during Witherspoon's final years and service as interim president during the 1794-1795 academic year unanimously convinced the Board of Trustees of his competence as president.



Edinburgh, by her celebrated University, lays both Europe and America under contribution for students'.<sup>79</sup> The reason for Edinburgh's success and its attraction at the time was its excellence in the branches of natural science, moral philosophy, and medicine. Smith argued that if Princeton were to rival Edinburgh's Enlightenment it too must 'maintain an adequate number of Professors in the liberal arts'.<sup>80</sup> By enlarging Princeton's commitment to liberal education, Princeton could, therefore, claim American youth who would otherwise travel abroad for an 'enlightened education'. Moreover, these students who had the means to cultivate 'liberal' interests in higher education often returned to become prominent statesmen. Smith remarked:

It would be in the interest, and would certainly be no inconsiderable glory to New Jersey, to be the fountain of education to so large a portion of America, and to furnish those States with their Legislators and their Judges, and be able to infuse her spirit into politics and councils of our country. We have a claim upon the wisdom and policy of the State, which requires it to provide the most effectual means for enlightening its own citizens, and to embrace the opportunity of acquiring influence and an ascendancy in the councils of the Union, which it can not otherwise obtain than by attracting their youth and educating their statesmen.<sup>81</sup>

This appeal to furthering the interests of New Jersey and its College through elevating the thought and manners of the next generation of American statesmen explains why New Jersey legislators granted Princeton \$500 per annum. Within a month after establishing this patronage, the Board of Trustees amended the College charter to reflect its reformed purpose. The 19<sup>th</sup> February 1796 amendment to the Charter of the College of New Jersey, claimed an institutional pursuit to 'patronize and promote the interest of science and literature, as the surest basis of their liberty, property and prosperity'.<sup>82</sup> Meanwhile, Smith began a non-denominational treatment of Christian principles at Princeton. This

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<sup>79</sup> 'Memorial' of the College of New Jersey petitioned to the New Jersey Legislature, January 1796, in Maclean, *HCNJ*, 15.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Princeton 1796 Charter amendments, PUA AC120.

reduced role of Calvinist seminary training motivated a number of conservative Presbyterian clergymen, particularly Evangelicals, to question Princeton's reformed purpose. Before this line of questioning found traction in the new century, Smith advanced measures toward realising his vision of Enlightenment at Princeton.

Smith's first substantial initiative toward achieving this objective was establishing a professorship of Chemistry with the appointment of John Maclean Sr., an emigrated Scottish chemist and physician educated at Glasgow University, on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1795.<sup>83</sup> This marked the first time that an American college offered a course on chemistry separate from natural philosophy.<sup>84</sup> On 11<sup>th</sup> November 1795, Smith was quoted in the *Woods Newark Gazette* and *New Jersey Adviser* that Maclean's chemistry and comparative anatomy lectures has 'application to agriculture and manufactures, so useful in every country, but especially in a new one'.<sup>85</sup> James Delbourgo suggests that this interest in the practical uses of scientific innovations demarcated the wider American intellectual pursuits around the turn of the century.<sup>86</sup> According to Archibald Alexander, Maclean 'became one of the most popular professors who ever graced the College [and] he was at home almost equally in all branches of science'.<sup>87</sup> Maclean also strengthened

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<sup>83</sup> TM, 355.

<sup>84</sup> See Theodore Hornberger, *Scientific Thought in the American Colleges, 1638-1800*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1945), 73. Maclean was solely responsible for lectures on chemistry and anatomy until the 1796 death of Walter Minto who previously taught mathematics and natural philosophy. Afterwards, Maclean taught natural philosophy in addition to his chemistry course whilst Smith temporarily took charge of lectures on mathematics (TM, 422-3). On 11 April 1797, Maclean was elected professor of natural philosophy and mathematics of which included his earlier lectures on chemistry (Ibid).

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in John Maclean Jr., *A Memoir of John Maclean, M.D., the first professor of chemistry in the College of New Jersey*, (Princeton, 1885), 20.

<sup>86</sup> See James Delbourgo, 'Common Sense, Useful Knowledge, and Matters of Fact in the Late Enlightenment: The Transatlantic Career of Perkins's Tractors', *WMQ*, 62:4, (October 2004): 643-684.

<sup>87</sup> Alexander's visit to Princeton in 1801, quoted in Maclean, *HCNJ*, 12.

Princeton's Scottish connections through corresponding with Scots on modern innovations in science.<sup>88</sup>

The growing popularity of natural philosophy among Princeton students assisted Smith's campaign to establish a degree-awarding programme on this subject. On 26<sup>th</sup> September 1799, the trustees 'resolved, that students may be admitted to read in College on such subjects of science as they or their parents may select, and shall receive certificates of their proficiency in said sciences'.<sup>89</sup> This programme involved coursework in the fields of geography, logic, mathematics, natural and moral philosophy (both speculative and practical), chemistry, astronomy and Belles Lettres.<sup>90</sup> Despite the College's limited treasury, Smith was active in supplying this new programme with modern scientific equipment.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, the inclusion of belles lettres and moral

<sup>88</sup> Maclean Jr. mentioned that through his father's Scottish contacts 'he kept himself fully posted with regard to discoveries in all departments of scientific research and when it was at all practicable he repeated the experiments of the most distinguished philosophers of the day' (Maclean Jr, *A Memoir of John Maclean, M.D.*, 43).

<sup>89</sup> TM, 33.

<sup>90</sup> Maclean, *HCNJ*, vol. 2, 29.

<sup>91</sup> On 15 August 1795, Joseph Reade, a Princeton junior, informed his father 'we have finished cosmic Sections which I mentioned in my last was so difficult and have began Helshams lectures on natural philosophy which are very difficult but very improving it would not only be improving but entertaining had we an apparatus but this were all destroyed last war as the College was made an hospital for the sick and wounded the library apparatus laid at the mercy of the soldiers who care as litter for learning as any set of men what were and never expecting to receive any advantage from it, destroyed everything' (Joseph Reade to his father, 15 August 1795, PUL MS15031). In 1796, Smith instructed Samuel Baynard, who then resided in England, to purchase 4 pair of 12-inch globes and one celestial globe, by request of Maclean (Smith to Samuel Baynard, 26 December 1796, PUL MS 12414). Shortly after his request of Baynard, Smith informed William Crawford that 'thro the friendly exertions of Dr. Green in Philadelphia, obtained a handsome and useful Chemical Apparatus, and been able to establish at present an excellent Chemical professor' (Smith to Crawford, 19 January 1796, PUL MS10151). In addition to their newly acquired scientific apparatus, the College also made use of 'a very good electrical machine' (Smith to Baynard, 26 December 1796, PUL MS 12414). From Smith's efforts to make Natural Philosophy, particularly the study of zoology, more attractive at Princeton, 'a valuable cabinet was purchased in 1802 by President Smith and the Professors, and offered to the Trustees at cost' at the cost of \$3,000 (Maclean, *Memoir*, 36). At this time, Princeton changed its traditional practise of hand-written degrees to printed degrees from a copper plate (Maclean, *HCNJ*, 29). The timing of this change implied that the science programme was intended as a permanent addition and that Princeton graduates would potentially pursue careers beyond circles acquainted with the trustees' signatures.

philosophy as course requirements in Smith's programme revealed a telling feature of its design for Enlightenment in knowledge of the mind and physics.

In addition to Smith's support for expanding and enhancing the sciences taught at Princeton, he appealed to the 'Moderate' belief that 'polite' culture (practised in moderation) did not conflict with Christian principles. Yet fundamentalist Evangelicals did not share this conviction. Although these differences of opinion became evident between 1804 and 1812, earlier Evangelical responses to Smith's practise of 'polite' activities suggested their disapproval. During their encounter at the 1791 American General Assembly, Archibald Alexander noticed that Smith's 'polite' manners and dress were peculiar for an American clergymen at that time. Alexander observed:

When he entered the house I did not observe him, but happening to turn my head I saw a person whom I must still consider the most elegant I ever saw. The beauty of his countenance, the clear and vivid complexion, the symmetry of his form and the exquisite finish of his dress, were such as to strike the beholder at first sight. The thought never occurred to me that he was a clergyman, and I supposed him to be some gentleman of Philadelphia, who had dropped in to hear the debate. I ought to have mentioned that Dr. Witherspoon was as plain an old man as ever I saw, and as free from any assumption of dignity.<sup>92</sup>

Alexander's comments on Smith's 'polite' appearance alone did not give an impression that he disapproved. His contrasting comparison between Smith and Witherspoon (who many Evangelical clergymen revered) implied that Smith did not conform to Witherspoon's austere example as an enlightened minister. The 1791 American General Assembly also witnessed a clear distancing on the part of Smith from Evangelical revivalists. After returning from the General Association of Connecticut, Ashbel Green (an earlier divinity student of Witherspoon) proposed that the Presbyterian Church join Connecticut's efforts to revive America's religious principles. Although Smith was not as outspoken against this proposition as Dr. Francis Alison, he still boldly opposed the

<sup>92</sup> Archibald Alexander, *The Life Archibald Alexander*, edited by James Alexander, (New York: Charles Scribner, 1854), 99.

spread of unrestrained Christian revivalism.<sup>93</sup> This revealing debate occurred in the wake of earlier suspicions that Smith had an inappropriate relationship with his aunt by marriage, Susan (Shippen) Blair. Between 1786 and August 1791, Smith and Blair developed an affectionate and flirtatious relationship through regularly exchanged letters and poems amounting to seventy in all.<sup>94</sup> Although a relationship of this sort was widely practised in 'polite' culture (evinced by Helen Stewart's correspondence with her former boarder Lord Dudley), Evangelicals disapproved of it.<sup>95</sup> It remains unclear how and to what extent their correspondence became known. But Smith's marriage to Witherspoon's daughter, Anne, and his prominent role at Princeton rendered this 'polite' activity potentially scandalous.<sup>96</sup> After rumours of their relationship stirred in 1787 (with no public charges of impropriety), they averted scandal by temporarily ending and later guarding their written displays of affection. Nevertheless, this episode left lingering questions for some Evangelical fundamentalists (such as Green and Alexander) about Smith's character and religious principles.

Smith's embrace of 'polite' culture and esteem for the writings of Scottish 'Moderates' was later reflected in his reforms of the curriculum. For example, Smith replaced Witherspoon's lectures on eloquence with Hugh Blair's lectures on belles lettres in teaching the course.<sup>97</sup> As previously shown in chapter two, Blair's lectures instructed

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>94</sup> David Bowers, 'The Smith-Blair Correspondence, 1786-1791', *PULC*, 4:4, (June 1943): 123.

<sup>95</sup> See C. Dallett Hemphill, 'Manners and Class in the Revolutionary Era: A Transatlantic Comparison', *WMQ*, 63:2, (April 2006): 345-372; S.H. Romilly (ed.), *Letters to 'Ivy' from the First Early of Dudley*, (London: Longmans and Green, 1905).

<sup>96</sup> See Ruth Bloch, 'Changing Conceptions of Sexuality and Romance in Eighteenth-Century America', *WMQ*, 60: 1, (January 2003): 13-42.

<sup>97</sup> Joseph Reade wrote that 'Dr. Smith mentioned his intention of making our class study Blair's Lectures instead of Witherspoon's Criticism' (Reade to his father, 6 December 1795, PUL C1272). He later claimed that Blair's Lectures 'are a very pleasing and improving study' (Reade to his father, 22 February 1796, PUL C1272).

how to refine eloquence and ‘polite’ manners as central elements for success in public life.<sup>98</sup> Contrary to Smith, Ashbel Green argued that Blair in his lectures ‘cautiously avoids everything which would offend a polite ear’.<sup>99</sup> Meanwhile, Smith’s interest in ‘polite’ culture was closely linked to preparing future enlightened statesmen of the republic. In support of this objective, the teaching of French (which was discontinued by most American colleges following the French Revolution) proved relevant for diplomatic reasons as the French Republic remained central on the world stage and French was the language of diplomacy.<sup>100</sup> In 1802, Smith influenced the election of William Thompson as professor of language whom he described ‘as a young gentleman of very polite accomplishments from Paris’.<sup>101</sup> Although Thompson’s primary teaching responsibility was French, he also taught first year courses in Latin and Greek with the assistance of a tutor, Mr. Bradford.<sup>102</sup> The inclusion of Latin, in particular, directly served the programme in science. According to Smith, ‘we have lately seen the Latin language retained as a vehicle of science, by the learned men of modern Europe, long after the cultivation of their vernacular dialects, had provided them with a more convenient instrument of instruction’.<sup>103</sup> While the popularity of ‘liberal science’ courses fuelled this demand for French and Latin, the small number of theology students (amounting to only four in 1804) explained the diminished prominence of Greek at this time.<sup>104</sup> Beyond

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<sup>98</sup> See chapter two, 64-70.

<sup>99</sup> Ashbel Green 14 June 1790; 21 February 1800 diary; and 11 February 1791 diary entry, PUL MS16045.

<sup>100</sup> For further reading on the eighteenth-century French ‘polite culture’ see Peter France, *Politeness and its Discontents: Problems in French Classical Culture*, (CUP, 2006).

<sup>101</sup> Smith to Hobart on 7 Aug 1804, in *Archives of the General Convention*, 463.

<sup>102</sup> Andrew Hunter’s 1804 report on Princeton’s curriculum commissioned by the trustees, in TM, 126-30.

<sup>103</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 116.

<sup>104</sup> TM, 128.

Princeton's curriculum, Smith encouraged students to pursue 'polite' refinement in literary and philosophical societies. Edward Thomas, then a Princeton student in 1802, observed that 'the advantages of the [Princeton] Societies and their libraries together with the convenience for study will prove greater to the students than can be derived at any other place'.<sup>105</sup>

Smith had a grander design that connected the teaching of natural sciences and 'polite' activities as auxiliary ways to improve the human condition and advance society toward Enlightenment. His moral philosophy taught the way in which these Enlightenment activities shared the same purpose of moral and intellectual improvement at Princeton. Smith's lectures of moral philosophy certainly resembled Witherspoon's earlier lectures insofar as they both appealed to Scottish philosophy, but Smith's moral thought centered on natural religion and methods of exercising the 'active and moral powers of the mind'. While Smith's moral thought drew inspiration from a raft of prominent theorists across the international Republic of Letters, he 'made especially careful use' of Thomas Reid's philosophical system.<sup>106</sup> But did Smith actually treat his lectures of moral philosophy as a continuation of Witherspoon's earlier thought (as Noll argues), and how significant was Smith's use of Reid's philosophical system?<sup>107</sup> Instead of Witherspoon's influence, this work suggests that Smith's creativity stemmed from the ways in which he adapted Reidian themes. According to Smith, 'in this field no writer has distinguished himself with greater zeal, ability, and success than Dr Reid of Glasgow

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<sup>105</sup> Edwards to Biddle, 27 February 1802, PUL MS12822. See Thomas P. Govan, 'Nicholas Biddle at Princeton, 1799-1801', *Princeton University Library Chronicles*, 9, (1948): 49-63.

<sup>106</sup> Noll, *Princeton*, 189; Sloan, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, 153-154.

<sup>107</sup> Noll suggests that Smith 'was developing, enriching, and broadening the legacy of Witherspoon, but still that legacy defined the content and direction of his thought. Smith's works testified to wider reading than Witherspoon's, and they certainly displayed a self-conscious attention to style that the Old Doctor's published lectures rarely betrayed. But they still expressed the vision Witherspoon had communicated with such power to the Revolutionary generation' (Noll, *Princeton*, 186-187).

[and] to no author is this branch of science, not to Locke himself, more indebted for its approaches towards perfection'.<sup>108</sup> Examining Smith as an intellectual disciple of Reid offers a new insight into the type of Enlightenment Smith sought to establish at Princeton.

In an appeal to Thomas Reid's philosophy, Smith taught that 'moral philosophy is an investigation of the Constitution and the laws of mind, particularly as it is capable of voluntary action and as susceptible of the sentiment of obligation [and] its great object is to ascertain duty and to regulate conduct'.<sup>109</sup> Similar to Reid, Smith believed that God implanted the 'active and moral powers of the mind' as the primary source for moral conduct.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, the perfection of the divinely inspired faculties of the mind fulfilled God's intended purpose for humankind. In alignment with Reid's philosophy, Smith claimed that 'our nature is then only perfect when it is conformed to the evident design of the creator'.<sup>111</sup>

This central belief heavily influenced Smith's reforms of the curriculum, sermons at Princeton, and lectures to the 'Junior and Senior Classes in the branches of Belles Lettres, Criticism & Composition, Moral Philosophy including the Principles of Metaphysics, Natural Theology, the philosophy of Civil government, the Laws of Nature and Nations Logic'.<sup>112</sup> He treated all of these branches of knowledge as mutually dependent upon the mind, and its exploration shed light on God's intention for humanity, independent of revealed religion. Consequently, Smith's Princeton Enlightenment diverged from its former seminary conventions. Smith believed 'that although the Author

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<sup>108</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 139.

<sup>109</sup> Samuel Stanhope Smith, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, 1806, notes taken by J. H. Reade, in PUA Box 53 Folder 1.

<sup>110</sup> See discussion of Reid in the introduction, 17-24.

<sup>111</sup> Smith, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, 1806 notes J. H. Reade Box 53 Folder 1.

<sup>112</sup> Hunter 1804 report, in TM, 126.



of our being has planted within the human breast the seeds of moral discernment, they require, in order to arrive at full maturity, to be carefully cultivated'.<sup>113</sup> In teaching methods of exercising the 'active and moral powers of the mind', Smith drew on Reid's philosophy adapted to his situation at Princeton. Like Stewart at this time, Smith's teaching of natural religion, metaphysics, and promotion of the moral improvement found in the liberal arts caused tensions with conservative Presbyterian ministers. The following chapter will discuss how Smith justified his system of moral education as a Presbyterian minister and examine his moral thought with particular attention to his treatment of the 'moral faculty' and its affiliated 'rules of duty' as central in developing 'moral and national character' at Princeton.

### **Conclusion**

From Stanhope Smith's various positions across a lifetime at Princeton, he witnessed and participated in early America's most defining moments. Born into the Great Awakening's legacy of religious revivalism and Presbyterian academies Smith had intimate knowledge of America's dominant religious principles. Yet his path as an ordained minister collided with a greater interest in pursuing philosophical truths. Thereafter Smith's passion for exploring the inner workings of the mind became interlocked with his religious convictions. At a pivotal time for both America's political future and Smith's direction in life, Witherspoon introduced Smith to prominent ideas and values of the Scottish Enlightenment. Through the writings of Thomas Reid, Smith found clarity in his treatment of metaphysics and education as a necessary part of cultivating virtue. Like Witherspoon, Smith, too, was reactive to the tense political and religious circumstances of his time. But these trials steadied his conviction in natural

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<sup>113</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 311-312.

religion and the perfection of the mind exercised through ‘liberal science’. In support of this belief, Smith created a system of moral education that reformed Princeton’s purpose from educating enlightened ministers to preparing future statesmen for public service. The next chapter will demonstrate that his commitment to creating innovative methods of exercising the ‘moral faculty’ as the primary source of moral conduct resulted in new ways Reidian thought could be applied in American society. From Smith’s system of moral education, the Princeton Enlightenment was born.

The success of Smith’s programme is best shown in the prosperity of the College during his administration and through the later careers of his students. During the first decade of Smith’s administration, the student population expanded from 87 in 1794 to 153 in 1804.<sup>114</sup> Although this estimate does not account for students (particularly those who assisted in the autumn harvest) who arrived after the start of the term, it clearly demonstrated a favourable response to Smith’s reforms of the curriculum. Of those students who praised Smith’s system, Edward Thomas, then Princeton student in 1802, suggested that ‘there is no place in my opinion where more improvement can be derived than Princeton’.<sup>115</sup> This high regard for Princeton’s reformed purpose under Smith’s system largely derived from fulfilling the demands for ‘enlightened learning’ that met the practical needs of the republic. As John Maclean Jr. suggested ‘the course instruction for that day-1804-was a very liberal one, and in many respects would compare favourably with the College curriculums of later times’.<sup>116</sup> As Smith had intended, the effect of his system of moral education produced statesmen and intellectuals. Of the five hundred and

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<sup>114</sup> The designation of freshman, sophomores, juniors, and seniors was used during Witherspoon’s presidency and continued during Smith’s presidency. Maclean, *HCNJ*, 6. In 1804, the Princeton student population consisted of seventeen freshman, thirty-seven sophomores, fifty-one juniors, and forty-eight seniors (TM, 126-130).

<sup>115</sup> Edward Thomas to Nicolas Biddle, 27 February 1802, PUL MS12822.

<sup>116</sup> Maclean, *HCNJ*, 59.

thirty-one graduates during Smith's presidency, he educated one future vice-president of the United States, George Mifflin Dallas (class of 1810); two presidents of the United States Senate, Samuel Southard (class of 1804) and James Iredell (class of 1805); nine Senators representing six different states; twenty-five members of the House of Representatives representing nine different states; four members of the President's cabinet; six United States ministers to foreign courts and congresses (Spain, Britain, Holland, Sweden, Russia, and Panama); thirteen supreme court and district court judges; eight state governors; four State Attorney-Generals (Delaware, New Jersey, and Mississippi); and one president of the United States Bank, Nicholas Biddle (class of 1801).<sup>117</sup> In addition to producing statesmen, Smith taught twenty-one future college

<sup>117</sup> Smith's graduates in government: Senators-John Berrien of Georgia (class of 1796), Henry Edwards of Connecticut (class of 1797), George Troup of Georgia (class of 1797), Daniel Huger of South Carolina (class of 1798), John Forsyth of Georgia (class of 1798), Alfred Cuthbert of Georgia (class of 1803), Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey (class of 1804), Arnold Naudain of Delaware (class of 1806), and John Walker (class of 1806); Members of the House of Representatives-Silas Condit of New Jersey (class of 1795), John Sergeant of Pennsylvania (class of 1795), William Gaston of North Carolina (class of 1796), Thomas Bayly of Virginia (class of 1797), James Clarke of North Carolina (class of 1797), Charles Mercer of Virginia (class of 1797), George Chambers of Pennsylvania (class of 1804), Thomas Crawford of Pennsylvania (class of 1804), Joseph Ingersoll of Pennsylvania (class of 1804), Stevenson Archer of Maryland (class of 1805), John Cuthbert of Georgia (class of 1805), George Holcombe of New Jersey (1805), Henry Habersham of Georgia (class of 1805), Thomas Telfair of Georgia (class of 1805), Edward Colston of Virginia (class of 1806), Alem Marr of Pennsylvania (class of 1807), William Heyward of South Carolina (class of 1808), James Wayne of Georgia (class of 1808), Samuel Eager of New York (class of 1809), Benjamin Howard of Maryland (class of 1809), Andrew Bruyn of New York (class of 1810), Kensey Johns of Delaware (class of 1810), James Stoddert of New Jersey (class of 1812), and Samuel Wilkin of New York (class of 1812); Members of the President's Cabinet-John Berrien, Attorney General (class of 1796), Richard Rush, Attorney General and Secretary of the Treasury (class of 1797), John Forsyth, Secretary of State (class of 1799), Samuel Southard, Secretary of Navy (class of 1804); Ministers to foreign courts and congresses-John Sergeant, minister at the Panama Congress (class of 1795), Richard Rush, minister at the English court (class of 1797), John Forsyth, minister at the Spanish court (class of 1799), Joseph Ingersoll, minister at the English court (class of 1804), Christopher Hughes, minister at the courts of Holland and Sweden (class of 1805), George Dallas, minister at the courts of Russia and England (class of 1810); Judges of Supreme and District courts-John Smith, district of Louisiana (class of 1795), Richard Keene, district attorney for Louisiana territory (class of 1795), Phillip Pendleton, district of Western Virginia (class of 1796), Elias Caldwell, clerk of Supreme court (class of 1796), William Frazer, eastern district of Wisconsin territory (class of 1797), Thomas Crawford, district of Columbia (class of 1804), Alfred Balch, district of Florida (class of 1805), Lewis Balch, district of western Virginia (class of 1806), Thomson Mason, district of Columbia (class of 1807), James Wayne, associate justice of the Supreme Court (class of 1808), Richard Coxe, attorney for the district of Columbia (class of 1808), and James Dunlop, district of Columbia (class of 1811); Governors of the States-Henry Edwards of Connecticut (class of 1797), George Troup of Georgia (class of 1797), John Forsyth of Georgia (class of 1799), Samuel Southard of New Jersey (class of 1804), James Iredell of North Carolina (class of 1806), Patrick Noble of South Carolina (class of 1806), Samuel Sprigg of Maryland (class of 1806), and Benjamin Seabrook of South Carolina (class of 1812) (Maclean, *HCNJ*, 113-117).

presidents and professors.<sup>118</sup> Philip Lindsley (Princeton class of 1804) remarked that ‘the government of the College at this period of its greatest prosperity, under President Smith, I can hardly use language too favourable’.<sup>119</sup> His overwhelming success in educating intellectual and political statesmen of the republic, however, did not convince fundamental Evangelicals of its merit. Despite their counter-Enlightenment campaign to remove Smith as president and dissolve his system of moral education (which will be discussed in chapter six), Smith at Princeton created an Enlightenment although it was short lived and riddled with controversy.

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 112. Of Smith’s students who pursued careers in higher education, Philip Lindsley was probably the most distinguished for his accomplishments. Lindsley continued many of Smith’s concepts on moral education as the president of the University of Nashville. For further reading on Lindsley’s ideas on education see John F. Woolverton, ‘Philip Lindsley and the Cause of Education in the Old Southwest’, *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, XIX:1, (March 1960): 3-7; Richard H. Haunton, ‘Education and Democracy: The Views of Philip Lindsley’, *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, XXI:2, (June 1962); James F. Davidson, ‘Philip Lindsley: The Teacher as Prophet’, *Peabody Journal of Education*, 41:6, (May 1964): 327-331.

<sup>119</sup> Philip Lindsley to Rev Dr Sprague, 2 February 1818, quoted in Maclean, *HCNJ*, 144.

## Chapter Five

### **The Primacy of the Mind at Princeton: Samuel Stanhope Smith on the ‘rules of duty’**

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Princetonians celebrated Samuel Stanhope Smith as ‘the pride and ornament of the institution’ whilst an influential group of fundamentalist Evangelicals challenged his vision of Enlightenment.<sup>1</sup> This counter-Enlightenment faction of clergymen opposed Princeton’s transformation from a New Light seminary to its focus on teaching modern innovations in the arts and natural sciences. Contrary to Witherspoon’s so-called ‘republican Christian Enlightenment’, Smith believed that the preparation of future enlightened and virtuous statesmen should be Princeton’s paramount concern. As an intellectual disciple of Thomas Reid’s philosophy and an advocate of ‘moderation’, Smith believed that ‘the state of society, the manners and customs which distinguish an age, a nation, or even a sect of philosophy or religion [are affected by] the constitutional character and habits of education’.<sup>2</sup> While Smith’s considerable connections with religious revivalists suggested he would not venture too far from the religious conventions and beliefs of this base, his reforms of the curriculum did so in significantly changing Princeton’s purpose.<sup>3</sup> The circumstances of the 1790s offer an explanation for why Smith appealed to Scottish ‘Moderate’ values and Thomas Reid’s philosophy in creating a system of moral education as the foundation for a new type of Enlightenment at Princeton.

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<sup>1</sup> Fredrick Beasley, ‘An Account of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Samuel Stanhope Smith’, *Analectic Magazine*, n.s., 1, (June 1820): 470.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Stanhope Smith, *The Lectures, Corrected and Improved, which have been delivered for a series of years, in the College of New Jersey; on the subjects of Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. one, (Trenton: Wilson, 1812), 314. In an appeal to Scottish philosophy, Smith treated moral philosophy as ‘an investigation of the constitution and laws of mind, especially as it is endued with the power of voluntary action, and is susceptible of the sentiments of duty and obligation. Its chief end is to ascertain the principles, and the rule of duty, and to regulate conduct, both in our individual capacities, and in our social relations, whether domestic or civil’ (Ibid., 12-13).

<sup>3</sup> See chapter four, 136-142.

The birth of American political parties in the years that followed the French Revolution made it particularly difficult to unite citizens who had different beliefs and values. Meanwhile, religious factions in Connecticut and in the Middle Atlantic states of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania advanced the revival of Christian principles. These ‘emotion-laden revivals’ replaced the ‘Great Awakening’ of the 1740s in a transitional period with what became the so-called ‘Second Great Awakening’ between 1805 and 1820.<sup>4</sup> Jon Butler has shown that post-revolutionary religious revivalism spread ‘with a breadth, swiftness, and persistence that make it difficult to separate them from the so-called Second Great Awakening’.<sup>5</sup> Similar to the counter-Enlightenment movement in Scotland, American religious revivalism endorsed anti-intellectual views and, in particular, revivalists opposed the diffusion of metaphysical philosophy and natural religion at institutions of higher education. Rev. Ashbel Green as a prominent Princeton trustee led a faction of revivalist clergymen who sought to renew Princeton’s seminary training as its primary objective. The different purposes of Smith’s Princeton Enlightenment and Green’s ambition to revive Christian principles caused tensions at Princeton. Before this counter-Enlightenment campaign took form within Princeton’s Board of Trustees (which will be discussed in the following chapter), Smith’s reforms of the curriculum from 1795 to 1799 achieved its objective in attracting students who formerly had gone abroad for a modern and enlightened education.

In an appeal to the earlier writings of Thomas Reid and ‘Moderate’ values, Smith countered American extremism in politics, philosophy, and religion. In doing so, he justified the usefulness of his system of moral education as the best way to address the challenges that divided the early republic. Smith claimed that ‘the dignity and happiness

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<sup>4</sup> Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People*, (HUP, 1992), 221.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

of individuals, the prosperity of states, and the order and happiness of the world, are intimately connected with the practical knowledge of those truths at the cultivation and improvement of which this science [moral philosophy] aims'.<sup>6</sup> While this ambition and purpose closely resembled Dugald Stewart's programme of moral education, the situation at Princeton demanded different considerations than those Stewart addressed at Edinburgh. Robert Ferguson suggests that 'since creativity takes place in this exchange from European models to American requisites, the important questions address the transmission of ideas, style, tone, and rhetorical emphasis'.<sup>7</sup> With this point in mind, this chapter will examine how Smith adapted the Reidian themes of the 'moral faculty' and its so-called rules of duty as the best source for fostering a Princeton Enlightenment that would influence enlightened thought and values, through its graduates, across the nation. In illustrating the purpose and import of his moral philosophy, Smith remarked that its objective 'is not so much a minute and extensive detail of particular duties [but rather] to investigate the laws of morality and duty in the various relations of life, and to cultivate the heart to virtue, which gives supreme value to this, and to every science'.<sup>8</sup> The application and exercise of these innate 'moral laws' assisted in enhancing the other branches of knowledge taught in his system of moral education. Furthermore, his lectures on the rules of duty and the 'moral faculty' offered original adaptations of Reidian themes that differed from Stewart's programme in significant ways. These adaptations reflected his ambition to restrain immoral 'passions' (which he linked to idleness) and civil disobedience from so-called 'Jacobins' whilst developing virtuous habits and 'Moderate' values of cultural and religious tolerance. For Smith, the 'moral faculty' was

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<sup>6</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 25.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Ferguson, *The American Enlightenment, 1750-1820*, (HUP, 1994), 25.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-25.

the instinctive ‘guide, the director and censor of our moral conduct...it indicates to us, on each action we are going to perform, what is permitted, what lawful, what forbidden by the voice of nature; and on reflection, what has been praiseworthy or guilty’.<sup>9</sup> His teaching of this principle and its affiliated branches of duty or rules of duty as he preferred to call them allegedly created Enlightenment, but he also directed its use in combating radical counter-Enlightenment factions at Princeton.

Smith’s particular use and adaptation of Scottish philosophy sheds new light on his response to the prominent tensions of the early republic. I shall first discuss how the emergence of political parties coupled with a renewed religious revivalism movement between 1794 and 1799 affected Princeton interests. Then I explore the early reasons why Ashbel Green believed Smith’s programme perverted Witherspoon’s legacy at Princeton. Finally, I examine how Smith’s system of moral education addressed issues at Princeton as well as across the republic by developing virtuous habits and strengthening obligations to the welfare of civil society through his use of the ‘moral faculty’ and its rules of duty. In the course of addressing these areas, this chapter shows that Smith’s programme of moral education advanced Scottish ‘Moderate’ values of cultural and religious tolerance whilst adapting Reidian themes in preparing Princeton graduates for future careers in public life. These philosophical principles and ideological beliefs illustrated the type of virtuous and enlightened graduates Smith’s Enlightenment aimed to produce. At the same time, this institutional purpose was a catalyst for later tensions with counter-Enlightenment interests.

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<sup>9</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 319.



### **A Decade of American Extremism: radical politics, religion, and philosophy**

Samuel Stanhope Smith's establishment of a Princeton Enlightenment did not occur in an intellectual vacuum. American debates over political and religious policies in the years that followed the French Revolution had a significant impact at Princeton and the emergence of counter-Enlightenment policies. As American political party tensions began to dominate public discourse, Witherspoon's declining health and blindness rendered him unable to govern and forced his early retirement from Princeton affairs.<sup>10</sup> Smith assumed Witherspoon's responsibilities of the College as vice-president and later continued these duties as Witherspoon's successor. Like Witherspoon's earlier experience, the spirit of revolution influenced Smith's administration. After its initial widespread support in America, the French Revolution received varied reactions from political, religious, and intellectual interest groups. Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick suggest that the French Revolution affected America in two ways: it supported the legitimacy of the Constitution and it served 'as a major point of reference for domestic political partisanship'.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, many conservative American Protestants interpreted French Revolutionary principles as an attack upon Christianity.

The belief that the French Revolution threatened Christianity increased after Thomas Paine (who had illustrated French Revolutionary principles in *The Rights of Man*) ridiculed the institution of religion, and especially Christianity in *The Age of*

<sup>10</sup> On his return from a 1783-1784 fund raising tour of Britain, Witherspoon lost the sight of one eye during an accident aboard the ship. In the final years of his life, he lost the use of his other eye after falling from his horse (Thomas Jefferson Wertebaker, 'John Witherspoon, Father of American Presbyterianism; Maker of Statesmen', in *The Lives of Eighteen from Princeton*, edited by William Thorp, (PUP, 1946), 83).

<sup>11</sup> Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788-1800*, (OUP, 1993), 309-310.

*Reason* (1794).<sup>12</sup> Afterwards, Princetonians campaigned against so-called ‘French impiety’ and radical political activism. The former president of Congress and prominent Princeton trustee Elias Boudinot regarded Paine’s argument as particularly dangerous, because of his popularity in America.<sup>13</sup> He even entertained the possibility that Paine did not write *The Age of Reason* since no one actually witnessed him doing so in prison.<sup>14</sup> Boudinot wrote that ‘many young and uninformed people, wholly unacquainted with the genuine principles of our holy religion, and the subtle and dishonest practises of her apostate adversaries, had with avidity engaged in reading it’.<sup>15</sup> The notion that Enlightenment ideals were contrary to Christian principles created an opening for American counter-Enlightenment policies to flourish.

This fear of allegedly corrupting ideas was represented in political rhetoric as well as affecting the curriculum at institutions of higher education. According to Luciana Herman, American political rhetoric at this time differentiated Federalist and Republican systems of government (as representative of the popular interests of the ‘people’) from

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<sup>12</sup> America’s support for the French Revolution was amplified after Thomas Paine’s *Rights of Man* (1791) illustrated that many of the French revolutionary principles drew from America’s example (Joyce Appleby, ‘America as a Model for the Radical French Reformers of 1789’, *WMQ*, 28:2, (April 1971): 267-286; Edward Larkin, *Thomas Paine and the Literature of Revolution*, (CUP, 2005), 78). On the French appeal to the American Revolution see Elise Marienstras and Naomi Wulf, ‘French Translations and the Reception of the Declaration of Independence’, *The Journal of American History*, 85:4, (March 1999): 1299). After receiving accounts of the 1793-1794 ‘Reign of Terror’, Americans, however, questioned if the French Revolution resembled the ideals of American republicanism (May, *The Enlightenment in America*, 223-225). Robin Blackburn has shown that the revolutions between 1776 and 1825 ‘should be seen as interconnected, with each helping to radicalize the next’ (Robin Blackburn, ‘Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of the Democratic Revolution’, *WMQ*, 63:4, (October 2006): 643). See T.H. Dickinson, ‘Thomas Paine and his American Critics’, *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 27, (2011): 174-185.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Ferguson argues that ‘no other text [*Common Sense*] by a single author can claim to have instantly captured and then so permanently held the national imagination’ (Robert Ferguson, ‘The Commonalities of *Common Sense*’, *WMQ*, 57:3, (July 2000): 465-466).

<sup>14</sup> Elias Boudinot. *The Age of Revelation: Or, The Age of Reason Shewn to be an Age of Infidelity*, (Philadelphia: Asbury Dickins, 1801), 66.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

the objectives of so-called ‘Jacobins’ who were known by some as ‘Democrats’.<sup>16</sup> As a firm advocate of Federalism, Noah Webster defined ‘Jacobin’ as a member of ‘a private club to overturn or manage government, one who opposes government in a secret or unlawful manner or from an unreasonable spirit of discontent’.<sup>17</sup> Federalists extended the label of ‘Jacobin’ to their Republican political opponents.<sup>18</sup> During Smith’s administration, Federalist ideology dominated Princeton’s faculty and the Board of Trustees. Princeton students however were not united under Federalism, as became apparent in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

In an important sense Princeton’s internal political and ideological struggle reflected national political party divisions. The argumentative lines drawn during the earlier Federalist and Anti-Federalist debates of 1787 through 1788 were realigned over the reception of the French Revolution.<sup>19</sup> Smith later wrote that ‘the people were unfortunately divided into two parties; one evidently partial to the French [Republicans], the other to the British [Federalists]’.<sup>20</sup> According to Gordon Wood, ‘their extreme partisanship divided the country more deeply than at any time since 1776’.<sup>21</sup> This

<sup>16</sup> See Peter Porcupine (aka William Cobbett), *History of the American Jacobins, Commonly Denominated Democrats*, (Philadelphia: J.G. Henderson, 1796), 18; Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith*, 220.

<sup>17</sup> In quoting Noah Webster’s *Compendious Dictionary*, Luciana Louise Herman, *1794: American Race, Republicanism and Transnational Revolution*, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley (Fall 2007), 20. For further reading on Webster see Richard Rollins, *The Long Journey of Noah Webster*, (Philadelphia, 1980).

<sup>18</sup> See J. Wendell Knox, *Conspiracy in American politics, 1787-1815*, (North Hampshire, NH: Ayer Publishing, 1972), 113. This monograph was converted from Knox’s doctoral dissertation at the University of North Carolina.

<sup>19</sup> See Herbert Storing, *What the anti-Federalists were for: The Political Thought of the Opponents of the Constitution*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

<sup>20</sup> Samuel Stanhope Smith, *History of the United States*, revised edition, vol. three, (Philadelphia: M. Carey, 1818), 109. For further reading on the Jay Treaty see Todd Estes, *The Jay Treaty Debate, Public Opinion, and the Evolution of Early American Political Culture*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006).

<sup>21</sup> Gordon Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A history of the early Republic, 1789-1815*, (OUP, 2009), 265-266.

political division was sealed after George Washington approved treaty negotiations with Britain (the Jay Treaty) whilst ignoring America's previous alliance with France.<sup>22</sup>

Consequently, this arrangement situated the United States in an uncomfortable position between treaties with France and Britain. Faced with the extreme opinions within his administration, namely from Alexander Hamilton (a Federalist) and Thomas Jefferson (a Republican), Washington decided on a policy of neutrality in foreign affairs.<sup>23</sup>

The United States' neutrality in France's war with Britain for a short time pacified the mounting tensions between Federalists and Republicans. But Wood suggests that 'by 1798 the Federalists were convinced that they had to do something to suppress what they believed were the sources of Jacobin influence in America' with the passing of the Alien Friends Act and the Naturalization Act.<sup>24</sup> These measures ignited existing tensions between the political parties as the so-called 1798 'Quasi-War' with France became a

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<sup>22</sup> In a diplomatic effort to prevent further British naval attacks upon American merchant ships, Washington sent John Jay, then Chief Justice from 1789 through 1795, to London in 1794 for discussions on terms of a treaty. This treaty known as 'the Jay Treaty', designed by the Secretary of Treasury Alexander Hamilton (a prominent Federalist) and ratified by Congress in November 1794, established an American commercial agreement with Britain for ten years (though it only lasted nine). Jefferson and others who supported French revolutionary principles and later its Republic objected to the Federalist's design in this treaty. The Federalists, in turn, labelled these opponents 'Jacobins' (Marshall Smelser, 'The Jacobin Phrenzy: Federalism and the Menace of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity', *Review of Politics*, 13, (1951): 457-482). While the Jay Treaty centred on the British-American commercial trade, it effectively prevented the United States and Britain from engaging each other in naval warfare (John Jay, *The Life of John Jay: with selections from his correspondence and miscellaneous papers*, edited by William Jay, vol. one, (New York: J & J Harper, 1833), 329). The American debt to French aid in the American Revolution whilst unofficially recognised as legitimate after the Old Regime dissolved, had some part in America's alignment with British interests. As shown in a series of letters between Thomas Jefferson, then Secretary of State (1789-1797), and Edmund Charles Genet (also known as Citizen Genet), Minister of the French Republic, the French Republic pursued repayment of America's debt both in funds and military support. Washington remarked to Congress that France attempted to 'involve us in war abroad, and discord and anarchy at home' (George Washington, 'A message of the President of the United States to Congress relative to France and Great-Britain: delivered December 5, 1793, with the papers therein referred, to which added the French originals', (Philadelphia, 1793), 3).

<sup>23</sup> See Elkins and McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism*, 354-363.

<sup>24</sup> Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 263-266. As Seth Cotlar has shown, 'Federalist orators and writers filled the public sphere with richly detailed accounts of a supposedly recently discovered, well-organized Jacobin conspiracy to overthrow the federal government' (Seth Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America: The Rise and Fall of Transatlantic Radicalism in the Early Republic*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 98).

reality.<sup>25</sup> Thomas Jefferson's sympathy toward French interests in this war did not escape the attention of his Federalist opponents at Princeton.<sup>26</sup> Samuel Miller (who was later appointed to Princeton's Board of Trustees in 1805) suggested that 'Mr Jefferson had resided in Paris more than five years...and returned to the United States in the Autumn of 1789, blindly enamoured of Jacobinism, his head full of the worst French Revolutionary ideas'.<sup>27</sup> Like Miller, other Princeton Federalists including Smith believed Jefferson was an 'apologist for insurrection and rebellion...in the vulgar shape of sedition and riot', and these 'Jacobin' policies threatened civil and moral order.<sup>28</sup> The Federalists' interpretation of 'Jacobins' influenced how they responded to emerging student disruptions across the republic. Although in governing Princeton Smith attempted to remain withdrawn from

<sup>25</sup> See J.R. Pole, 'Jeffersonian Democracy and the Federalist Dilemma in New Jersey, 1798-1812', *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society*, 74, (1956): 260-292. As the United States president John Adams noted that 'it was with the utmost reluctance that I found myself under a necessity in 1798, of having recourse to hostilities against France' (Adams to John Quincy Adams, April 1809, in *Correspondence of the Late President Adams, originally published in the Boston Patriot*, number one, (Boston: Everett and Munroe, 1809), p. 9). This brief war, limited to naval warfare, inspired a revival of patriotic sentiments. Stanhope Smith observed that 'the ardour of 1776 was revived [and] for a time, the spirit of party appeared suspended' (Smith, *History of the United States*, 100). For further reading on the 1798 Quasi War see Michael Palmer, *Stoddert's War: Naval operations during the quasi-war with France, 1798-1801*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987).

<sup>26</sup> As John Adams's vice-president, Jefferson later wrote that 'I sincerely deplore the situation of our affairs with France [and] war with them, and consequent alliance with Great Britain, will completely compass the object of the executive council' (Jefferson to Madison, 22 January 1797 in *Memoir, Correspondence, and Miscellanies, from the Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, edited by Thomas Jefferson Randolph, second edition, (Charlottesville: Carr and Co., 1830), 347. In a failed attempt at uniting opposing views, Jefferson served as vice-president after losing to Adams in the 1797 presidential election. Jefferson's remarks were directed toward John Adams's policies that led to the 1798 Franco-American War also known as the 'Quasi-War'.

<sup>27</sup> Samuel Miller, *The Life of Samuel Miller, D.D., LL.D.*, (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen and Haffelfinger, 1869), n133.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* According to Smith, Jefferson's notion of encouraging republican virtue by weakening the union and strengthening state rights communicated 'the principles of national imbecility & disorganisation' (Smith to Jonathan Dayton 22 December 1802, PUL C0028). For further reading on Smith's political views see Maclean, *HCNJ*, 137-139.

these political disputes, his vote for John Adams as a member of the Electoral College further evinced his support of Federalist values.<sup>29</sup>

In association with these Federalist beliefs, emerging religious revivalists believed these so-called ‘Jacobin’ conspirators used philosophy to mask their alleged radical politics and atheist agenda. As a prominent member of this group, Ashbel Green suggested that ‘[“Jacobins”] talked, indeed, of morality, but they openly professed to abhor religion; unless, after the extermination of every semblance of Christianity, the worship of a harlot, in the guise of the goddess of reason, might be called their religion’.<sup>30</sup> This form of anti-intellectualism threatened the acceptability of Smith’s system of moral education. Despite believing that his system combated ‘false philosophy [that led] the mind to universal scepticism’, Smith’s lectures were interpreted by fundamentalist Evangelicals, such as Green, as advancing interests contrary to Christianity.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, Smith believed that ‘Jacobinism’ and the anti-intellectualism of religious revivalists were just two different forms of extremism. His system challenged these types of counter-Enlightenment (amidst fierce resistance) with an appeal to Scottish philosophy and ‘Moderate’ values as a way to secure order and virtue at Princeton.

Restraining radical political sentiments among Princeton students appeared to be difficult for Smith around the turn of the nineteenth century. Princeton’s local tavern was a haven for students to discuss politics in the company of those who supported French revolutionary principles. For example, Smith remarked that in 1794 a Princeton student (Mr. Perry) ‘does not seem very well pleased with any person who does not advocate

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<sup>29</sup> Monk, ‘Samuel Stanhope Smith’, 87. Smith later credited ideas supported by Jefferson-Republicans for the rise in civil disobedience particularly from young men. This issue in relation to Smith’s system will be discussed in chapter six.

<sup>30</sup> Ashbel Green, *The Life of Ashbel Green, V.D.M., Begun to be written by himself in his eighty-second year and continued to his eighty-fourth. Prepared for press at he author’s request by Joseph H. Jones*, (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1849), 31.

<sup>31</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 138.

with zeal all the measures of the French Republic'. Smith added that Perry absconded from campus and has 'taken his board in a tavern where some French gentlemen whose political sentiments accord with his'.<sup>32</sup> Smith implied a causal relationship between Perry's neglect of his studies and his enthusiastic support for extreme French revolutionary principles.<sup>33</sup> Impressionable young men such as Perry, Smith believed, were particularly vulnerable to adopting these sentiments. He cautioned his students that

those scenes of horrible barbarity which are sometimes witnessed at the stake of superstition, or the guillotine of revolution, are the effect of artificial excitement, in which, in the delirium of false religion or false patriotism, the mistaken zealots are made to conceive themselves the avengers of God, or their country.<sup>34</sup>

As a central part of his system of moral education, Smith's lectures of moral philosophy sought to prevent these radical activities through the proper exercise of the mind and reasonable moderation. For Smith, 'Jacobins' failed to realise the moral and social consequences that their radical actions caused. Smith's inclusion of religious enthusiasm as equally dangerous to civil and moral order demonstrated his continued resistance to religious revivalism, which he had previously voiced in the 1791 American General Assembly.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to combating political and philosophical radicalism with enlightened morals, Smith's administration conformed to traditional College rules. Princeton students, for example, were expected to show their respect for faculty members by removing their hats within ten 'rods' of the president and five 'rods' of the tutors.<sup>36</sup> The jurist and statesman William Paterson (Princeton class of 1766) noted that 'something of the

<sup>32</sup> Smith to Wachmuth, 2 June 1794, PUL MS12364.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, n264.

<sup>35</sup> See chapter four, 159.

<sup>36</sup> William Paterson quoted in *Glimpses of Colonial Society and the Life at Princeton College, 1766-1773*, edited by W. Jay Mills, (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1903), 16.



formal, old-time collegiate manners can be learned from the fact that Samuel Stanhope Smith, when president, refused to speak to his own nephew for a period of six months, owing to the unfortunate young man's breach of etiquette in calling him "Doctor," instead of "Doctor Smith".<sup>37</sup> The 1798 emergence of a faction of unruly students (who Smith saw as 'Jacobins') challenged these formal edicts that demanded displays of student obedience and conformity to Princeton's rules.<sup>38</sup> In cases when his attempts at encouraging moderation failed, Smith appealed to parental intervention.<sup>39</sup> Despite these measures, increasing episodes of student defiance toward these conventions alarmed Smith who sensed his control of the College weakening. In a letter to Jonathan Baynard, Smith wrote that 'this College seems to be the last bulwark of old principles to the south of your states...but what my good friend...will the new principles at last overturn?'<sup>40</sup> Smith's adaptation of Reidian themes and promotion of 'Moderate' beliefs in his system of moral education combated these allegedly divisive 'new principles'. At the same time, the disruptive influence of emerging student 'Jacobin' activities and the subsequent rise of religious revivalism amongst the trustees threatened Smith's enlightened ambition for Princeton.

Smith did not believe these challenges to Enlightenment would arrest his plans for Princeton. On the contrary, he saw the political and religious conflicts of this age as an opportunity for moral, intellectual, and scientific improvement. While Smith granted that 'good men have declaimed against the vices and miseries of war and have connected its existence so much with absolute depravity of heart', he believed that the absence of war

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 16-17.

<sup>38</sup> Paul Gilge, *Rioting in America*, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999), 73.

<sup>39</sup> In a circular letter to parents, 3 September 1799, PUL MS9976.

<sup>40</sup> Smith to Baynard, 10 March 1802, PUL MS2164.



and conflict could only exist after the second coming of Christ.<sup>41</sup> In the meantime, ‘while human nature continues as it is indeed, if man does not actually transmigrate into a higher order of being, wars will [inevitably] spring out of the relative interests of states and the passions of mankind’.<sup>42</sup> For Smith, war and conflict was an inherent feature of human nature and as such should be treated as part of God’s intention for humankind. He observed ‘a vigour of mind, a fervour and enterprise of genius among... martial people’.<sup>43</sup> During prolonged periods of ‘peaceful luxury’ this martial spirit of innovation degenerated. These beneficial effects of conflict had a bearing on the purpose of Smith’s system of moral education and the circumstances during his administration.

In the years that followed the end of the American War of Independence, Smith believed that the relative tranquillity caused many incoming students to treat education as ‘nothing more than a subordinate way to getting money’.<sup>44</sup> He believed that this particular objective for higher education resulted in ‘not one idea of honour annexed to scholarship nor one spark of ambition to improve [which] commonly gives [students] up to habits of idleness [in the study of] liberal science’.<sup>45</sup> As political and intellectual conflict arose in the new republic, Smith sought to channel these tensions as motivation for ‘improving activities’ at Princeton. The degenerative effects of idleness, unrestrained passions, and ‘false’ or sceptical philosophy were concerns that Smith addressed in his lectures of moral philosophy. His system of moral education, therefore, served a dual purpose: it prepared enlightened statesmen for future public service and restrained

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<sup>41</sup> Smith to Rush, 27 February 1792, PUL MS14429. See Nathan Hatch, ‘The Origins of Civil Millennialism in America: New England Clergymen, War with France, and the Revolution’, *WMQ*, 31:3, (July 1974): 407-430.

<sup>42</sup> Smith to Rush, 27 February 1792, PUL MS14429.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

immoral ‘passions’ as graduates entered public life. These purposes offer an explanation why Smith’s system of moral education placed so much emphasis on ‘liberal science’ at Princeton. According to Smith, ‘idleness degenerates everything; and mere amusement, where *it* occupies a large portion of our time, evaporated the greatest and most respectable qualities of human nature’.<sup>46</sup> Moral reform required constant attention, leaving little time for amusements or distractions. Joseph Reade, then a third year Princeton student in 1795, remarked that ‘Dr Smith has informed us that we have more information to study than any preceding class and shall [sic] be obliged to employ every moment of our time’.<sup>47</sup>

While instinctive ‘passions’ could motivate ‘noble principles of action’ (as evinced by the glorified memory of previous American patriots), Smith taught that ‘passions’ were also ‘prone to excess, and by incautious indulgence, are so apt to acquire a dangerous dominion over the heart’.<sup>48</sup> Consequently, he suggested ‘that one of the most important purposes of a wise and virtuous education is to mark out the legitimate objects of their pursuit, and to impose upon them prudent restraints’.<sup>49</sup> Upon his 1795 appointment as Princeton’s president, Smith believed student idleness and immoral passions threatened the College’s security and virtue amongst its students.<sup>50</sup> While Princeton offered conventional rules that discouraged misconduct, Smith’s lectures of moral philosophy prepared young men to govern their own actions independently. Smith argued:

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<sup>46</sup> Samuel Stanhope Smith. *Sermons*, (Newark: Jacob Halsey and Co., 1799), 148.

<sup>47</sup> Joseph Reade to his father, 16 May 1796, PUL MS15031.

<sup>48</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 260.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Smith to Green 1795, PUL MS12414.

It is the sincere aim, and the gradual tendency of true philosophy to correct the errors of prejudice, and to dissipate the mists that shed themselves over the mind, in consequence of the prevalence of any dominant affection or passion [and] in our philosophical enquiries, we have as much reason to avoid the dangers of a weak and suspicious scepticism, as of a bold and positive dogmatism.<sup>51</sup>

Smith therefore addressed the political, moral and intellectual trials of his time by teaching how to develop virtuous habits in practical situations through perfecting the instinctive principles of the mind. Smith claimed that ‘in the present state of things, I conceive that [wars and domestic conflicts] are even necessary to the improvement of human nature’.<sup>52</sup>

### **Counter-Enlightenment Interests: Ashbel Green’s reception of Smith’s philosophy**

Stanhope Smith’s lectures and sermons at Princeton offered evidence of a supreme being and His design for implanting humankind with ‘intellectual, active and moral powers of the mind’. In doing so, Smith drew heavily on Thomas Reid’s ‘Common Sense’ philosophy. Smith remarked that ‘in this field no writer has distinguished himself with greater zeal, ability, and success than Dr Reid of Glasgow’.<sup>53</sup> As shown in the introduction, Reid presented his ‘principles of common sense’ as self-evident maxims that governed the examination of innate faculties and operations of the mind.<sup>54</sup> At the heart of this philosophical system, Reid suggested:

Common sense and reason have both one author; that almighty Author, in all whose other works we observe consistency, uniformity, and beauty, which charm and delight the understanding; there must, therefore, be some order and consistency in the human faculties, as well as in other parts of his workmanship.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 27.

<sup>52</sup> Smith to Rush, 27 February 1792, PUL MS14429.

<sup>53</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 139.

<sup>54</sup> See introduction, 9-16.

<sup>55</sup> Reid, *Inquiry*, 132.

In agreement with Reid, Smith remarked that ‘the basis of all true science rests on the uniformity of nature in all her operations’.<sup>56</sup> In addition, Smith promoted introspective reflection as a method to evaluate moral progress and detect vicious habits born from immoral passions that followed idleness.<sup>57</sup> Smith’s use of Reid’s philosophy to counter ‘false’ philosophy was not new to Princeton. Witherspoon had previously endorsed Reid’s efforts in challenging David Hume’s mitigated scepticism. Witherspoon commented that Hume’s attempt to ‘shake the certainty of our belief, upon *cause* and *effect*, upon *personal identity* and the idea of *power* [was countered with] dictates of *common sense* [by] authors of Scotland’.<sup>58</sup> Witherspoon did not however share Reid’s enthusiasm for metaphysics in sermons or teaching moral philosophy—unlike Smith. Like Reid, Smith argued that man controls ‘his own will and over the actions of his mind, as well as of his body’.<sup>59</sup> While he admitted that ‘the mind seldom or never acts without some motive, that is, without some end in view at the time, [Smith taught that] Dr Reid has rendered it probable that, on many occasions, it forms determinations without motive, by the immediate energy of its own self-control’.<sup>60</sup> The mind’s active power to determine an intended action or refrain from action enabled a degree of self-determination independent of God’s intervention. On this belief, Smith taught that ‘the volitions of the mind are the effect of its own internal energy, not by a previous volition, but by an

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<sup>56</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 121.

<sup>57</sup> For example, Joseph Reade wrote whilst attending Smith’s lectures of moral philosophy in 1795 that ‘reflection that great support of the good and the dread of the evil whose aid alone is sufficient to guide us in the path of virtue... The mind of man is constantly active it never remains dormant and when we have nothing to engage our thoughts and actions it will always run into vice. For it is my firm opinion that we are by nature equally prone to evil that it depends chiefly on the education and company of youth that one acts better than another’ (Reade to his father, 7 February 1796 & 21 June 1796, PUL MS15031).

<sup>58</sup> Witherspoon, *Lectures*, 50.

<sup>59</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 291. Smith appealed to Reid’s earlier belief that ‘every man is conscious of a power to determine, in things which he conceives to depend upon his determination’ (Reid, *Active Powers*, 59).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

original, innate power over its own actions, of which every man who reflects upon himself is conscious'.<sup>61</sup> This belief that the human mind, if properly cultivated, possessed powers to act independent of God was problematic for orthodox Calvinists. For example, Ashbel Green wrote that 'Dr Smith of Princeton preached at Arch St [Philadelphia] in the morning an alarming sermon, but somewhat Arminianish'.<sup>62</sup> Beyond his sermons, Smith received similar criticisms for teaching Reidian 'active powers of the mind'. William Weeks, then a Princeton student, complained that 'Reid is grossly Arminian and advocates a self-determining power, which if it means anything, means that the creature is independent of the Creator'.<sup>63</sup> In agreement with Weeks's evaluation of Reid and, by extension Smith, Green believed Smith's moral philosophy was contrary to Calvinistic principles and therefore posed a threat to Princeton's religious purpose.

In a transitional moment between the first and second 'Great Awakenings', an increasing number of Evangelicals (including Green) appealed to the thought of previous revivalists such as Jonathan Edwards (who for a short time had served as Princeton's president).<sup>64</sup> In discussing the importance of the conversion experience and the 'rebirth' that followed, Green claimed that 'President Edwards has illustrated this idea with great ingenuity in his treatise on Original Sin'.<sup>65</sup> Contrary to the later teachings of Smith and Reid, Edwards advocated that people act from 'moral necessity'.<sup>66</sup> He suggested that 'if

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<sup>61</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 283.

<sup>62</sup> Green's diary entry, 14 April 1799, PUL C0257 MS16045.

<sup>63</sup> William Weeks to Ebenezer Weeks, 11 April 1808, PUL, AM 11456.

<sup>64</sup> See Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Edwin Gaustad, *Neither King Nor Prelate: Religion and the new nation, 1776-1826*, (London, Eerdmans, 1993).

<sup>65</sup> Green, *Lectures*, 245.

<sup>66</sup> See Avihu Zakai, *Jonathan Edwards's Philosophy of History: The reenchantment of the world in the age of Enlightenment*, (PUP, 2003), 97; Norman Fiering, *Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought and Its British Context*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 122, 140, 351, 356;

the acts of the will are excited by motives, those motives are the causes of those acts of the will; which makes the acts of the will necessary; as effects necessarily follow the efficiency of the cause'.<sup>67</sup> This argument that humankind necessarily acts according to the strongest motive resulted in prioritising revelation as the primary cause of moral agency and the source for developing 'a strong habit of virtue'.<sup>68</sup> In support of Edwards's 'moral necessity', Green maintained that 'to the eye of contemplative and sober reason, willing to discern its Creator, a *present God* is recognised in all that we behold'.<sup>69</sup> This concept of a 'present God' limited the power for agents to cause an intended effect without the previous presence of divine intervention. Furthermore, Green preached that God's will 'is indicated by the connexion between his volition and the effects produced...this connexion according to the sure testimony of divine revelation, is illimitably certain'.<sup>70</sup> Smith rejected that people were victims of motives and slaves of 'inclination, appétit, or passion, as it arises'.<sup>71</sup> Beyond these fundamental differences, Smith and Green differed in their interpretation of Witherspoon and the purpose of a Princeton education.

The reasons for Ashbel Green's early opposition to Smith's moral thought, that later evolved into a counter-Enlightenment campaign for his removal from Princeton, merit further discussion. For Green, Witherspoon was an ideal example of 'enlightened piety' and his influence greatly affected Green's vision of Princeton as a theological seminary. Upon Green's 1781 arrival at Princeton, Smith governed Princeton's greatly

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Stephen Wilson, *Virtue Reformed: Rereading Jonathan Edwards's ethics*, (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 203-266.

<sup>67</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the Modern and Prevailing Notions Respecting that of Freedom of Will*, (Boston: Thomas Field, 1762), 183.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>69</sup> Ashbel Green, *Lectures on the Shorter Catechism of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America*, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1829), 194.

<sup>70</sup> Ashbel Green, *Christian Advocate*, 104.

<sup>71</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 283.

reduced student population (fifty students) with the assistance of one tutor, James Riddle.<sup>72</sup> Green remarked that after more than six weeks into the academic year ‘Dr Witherspoon left congress finally, in the autumn of that year [1781] and in the following winter heard the recitations of the senior class on his own lectures’.<sup>73</sup> Witherspoon remained at Princeton the following year after Congress withdrew from Philadelphia’s State House and assembled at Princeton.<sup>74</sup> Congress held meetings at the Nassau Hall library room and many congressmen lodged in vacant student rooms within the same building.<sup>75</sup> The presence of Congress at Princeton certainly strengthened the revolutionary spirit amongst the students and influenced the successful ‘petition to the legislature to exempt the whole of the college estate from taxation’.<sup>76</sup> Afterwards, Princeton’s 1783 graduation was exceptional with prominent statesmen in attendance. Green recalled that ‘we accordingly had on the stage, with the trustees and the graduating class, the whole of the congress, the ministers of France and Holland, and commander-in-chief of the American army’.<sup>77</sup> He addressed this influential group as Princeton’s valedictorian and Washington followed with concluding remarks. Washington’s and

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<sup>72</sup> Green observed devastation from the earlier use of the college edifice (Nassau Hall) as barracks for the British and Continental soldiers and site of the 1777 Battle of Princeton. Green noted that ‘the dilapidation and pollution of the college edifice, when left by its military occupants, extended to every part of it, and rendered it utterly unfit, without a thorough cleansing and repair, for the residence of students’ (Green, *The Life of Ashbel Green*, 136-138).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> This relocation of Congress was in response to 300 previous American soldiers who assembled around Philadelphia’s State House in an effort to urge Congress’s payment for their past service. Although these soldiers dispersed within three hours, congressmen headed the threat and temporarily relocated the seat of the American government to Princeton (Gary Nash, *First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 134).

<sup>75</sup> Green to Archibald Alexander, 23 April 1841, in *The Life of Ashbel Green*, 141-142.

<sup>76</sup> TM 24 September 1783, 237.

<sup>77</sup> Green, *Life of Ashbel Green*, 143.

Congress's favourable impression of Green certainly contributed to his later appointment as Congress's chaplain from 1792 to 1800.<sup>78</sup>

After graduating, Green remained at Princeton for two years to study divinity with Witherspoon and as a tutor and later professor of mathematics and natural philosophy. Green revealed that 'it was my happiness, while tutor and professor in the college, to possess the friendship and confidence both of Dr Witherspoon and Dr Smith'.<sup>79</sup> From their guidance, Green chose to pursue a career in the ministry instead of law. In a revealing statement, Green claimed:

To Dr Witherspoon, more than to any other human being, I am indebted for whatever of influence or success has attended me in life. His useful instructions, wise counsels, kind monitions, and friendly aid, were of incalculable advantage during the whole period of fourteen years that he lived after my first acquaintance with him.<sup>80</sup>

At the start of his career, Witherspoon convinced Green to join Rev James Sprout at the Second Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia.<sup>81</sup> Green wrote:

the congregation I served, was originally composed, almost exclusively, of the friends and followers of the celebrated Mr. Whitfield; and the church was, at first, constituted, I think wholly, of converts made under his ministry, and that of his coadjutors, the Tennents, Blairs, and Dr Finley, afterwards president of the college at Princeton.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Douglas Brackenridge, *The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation: a bicentennial history, 1799-1999*, (Westmont, IL: Geneva Press, 1999), 18. In a gesture of gratitude, Washington presented the trustees with fifty guineas, which they used to commission Washington's portrait by Peale that adorned the same frame and placement in Nassau Hall as the decapitated portrait of King George. Ironically, Washington's artillery during the Battle of Princeton inflicted damage to the portrait that was replaced by Peale's later work where it still remains today (Green, *Life of Ashbel Green*, 143-144).

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 146-7.

<sup>81</sup> After suffering an eye affliction, Green contemplated an early retirement. Witherspoon convinced him otherwise. Witherspoon informed Green that 'At about your age, I was for three years in much the same situation as that in which you now are, and I know that but a few have resolution to take the course I recommend; but there is no other alternative but to do it, or consent to be worthless to the end of life' (*Ibid.*, 153-4).

<sup>82</sup> Ashbel Green to William Sprague, 10 April 1832, in William Sprague and Leonard Woods (eds.), *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, (Albany, Boston, Philadelphia, 1832), 124-125.



His congregation's tradition of supporting religious revivalism certainly strengthened his attachment to his part in this purpose. Furthermore, the circumstances surrounding Green's 1786 ordination and later appointment suggested that he intended to continue Witherspoon's efforts to bridge lingering Old and New Light divisions. Green remarked:

The arrangements for my ordination had been made with a view to mingle, and if possible to harmonize the *old side* and the *new side* members of the Presbytery. For although nearly seventy-nine years had elapsed, since in 1752 the rival Synods had become united; two Presbyteries of Philadelphia had existed, composed severally of the litigant parties; and the aged members of both sides had retained something of the old bitter feelings towards each other.<sup>83</sup>

This desire for ecclesiastical unity continued through the first meeting of the General Assembly of Presbyterian ministers in 1789 which Witherspoon had organised.

According to Green, 'the first two years of my ministry were arduous in the extreme; but I look back to them with pleasure and with gratitude to Dr Witherspoon'.<sup>84</sup> Yet Green did not extend the same high regard for Smith at this time or in the years that followed.

After Smith's eulogy of Benjamin Franklin on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1791 at the German Lutheran Church in Philadelphia, Green cautioned Smith regarding his use of metaphysics. Green noted that 'I endeavoured to state to him as fully as I can the danger of his fervent labels to warn to fly from the wrath to come'.<sup>85</sup> Green continued:

I was fearful that the letter I wrote might offend him, but I found it had not. This is encouragement to do duty and leave events with God. The letter was as stinging as I could make it. But I told him it was because I was convinced it to be necessary, and conscience seems to have witnessed the truth. He is not however as much affected as I wish he was.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Green, *Life of Ashbel Green*, 154.

<sup>84</sup> Afterwards, Green was a member of the committee that drafted the charter of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America that Congress ratified on 28 March 1799. After the founding of the Church, the General Assembly elected Elias Boudinot as its president and Green as vice-president on 26 June 1799 (*Ibid.*, 12-17, 155).

<sup>85</sup> Green, *Diary*, 4 March 1791, PUL C0257 MS16045.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

Green was correct in believing that Smith dismissed his ‘stinging’ remarks against the use of metaphysics as evinced by its continued use in his lectures of moral philosophy and sermons at Princeton. Beyond Smith’s particular use of metaphysics Green was not convinced that he was a capable orator and scholar. He described Smith’s eulogy of Franklin ‘as lame and very imperfect and that the desire was but miserably executed’. Moreover, he believed ‘there was want of taste, want of judgement or skill and want of strength [and] the character of this performance is the character of all the performances which I have heard from this man’.<sup>87</sup> For these reasons he questioned why Smith was celebrated by so many and concluded that ‘it is a kind of fashion to esteem him a very sensible and able writer’.<sup>88</sup> Smith’s students, however, did not share Green’s negative evaluation. For example, Joseph Reade, then a junior at Princeton in 1795, declared that ‘I am very much pleased with Dr Smith as he appears to be both a man of wit and sense’.<sup>89</sup> Green’s private thoughts of Smith (expressed in an encrypted diary written in a mixture of Greek, Latin, and English) revealed reasons for his later organisation of a campaign to remove Smith as Princeton’s president at the turn of the century.<sup>90</sup> The members of this counter-Enlightenment campaign objected to the concepts and values taught in Smith’s lectures of moral philosophy (most notably the themes of duty and of the ‘moral faculty’). Green believed that Smith perverted Witherspoon’s moral philosophy and his legacy at Princeton. From a devotion to the memory of Witherspoon and duty to

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Reade to his father, 15 August 1795, PUL C1272 MS15031.

<sup>90</sup> Green’s son decrypted his father’s diary after his death. On 8 May 1861, he noted that ‘my father requests that this diary of his should be burnt, and says he would have burnt it himself, but that he found it useful to him as long as he lived. He evidently wrote it for no human eye but his own’ (in the introduction to Ashbel Green’s Diary, PUL C0257 MS16045).

the ‘distinguishing doctrines of evangelical truth, as exhibited in the Calvinistick [sic] system’, he later sought to revive Princeton’s traditional religious purpose.<sup>91</sup>

Green’s central criticisms of Smith’s use of metaphysics implied that Smith extended this practise in all of his sermons. While this observation was indeed verified in many of Smith’s Sunday addresses at Princeton, his treatment of revealed and natural religion was far more guarded against controversy than Green suggested. As a Presbyterian minister whose sermons were celebrated as ‘enlightened and eloquent’ across the middle and southern states, Smith preached ‘pure and rational piety’ found in ‘true religion’. Smith agreed with revivalists insofar that ‘we ought to make a grand effort to obtain more qualified men in the ministry and to quicken the zeal of individual pastors in the discharge of their parochial duties’.<sup>92</sup> While Smith agreed that irreligion was a dangerous product of the French Revolution and should be combated from the pulpit, he argued that the cultivation of the instinctive faculties of the mind prevented the adoption of philosophical scepticism and political radicalism associated with ‘Jacobinism’. On this difference, Smith distinguished between compatible yet different roles of revealed and natural religion. Smith taught:

On the subject of our holy religion, most certainly, we are indebted to revelation exclusively for the peculiar, and distinguishing doctrines of the Christian system. But the powers of reason which God hath bestowed on human nature, are competent to enlighten the mind on the general and practical duties of morality and virtue. The spirit of inspiration does, unquestionably, illustrate them more clearly, and confer additional evidence and authority on the prescriptions of conscience, and on all the motives of duty.<sup>93</sup>

In this appeal to Reid’s notion of natural religion, Smith taught that the divinely inspired faculty of reason identified evidence of the existence of and natural obligation to God. In

<sup>91</sup> Ashbel Green, *Lectures on a Shorter Catechism*, vi.

<sup>92</sup> Smith to Jedediah Morse, 24 February 1799, PUL MS2162.

<sup>93</sup> Samuel Stanhope Smith, *A Comprehensive View of the Leading and Most Important Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion*, (New Brunswick: Deare and Myer, 1815), 71.

contrast, Green followed Witherspoon's notion that God implanted humankind's earthly moral duties in their hearts and revealed His laws of pious conduct in the Scriptures. For Green, humankind's fall from Grace in the Garden of Eden forever corrupted God's original design of the human constitution. Afterwards, humankind depended upon revelation to ascertain God's moral law. Green claimed:

The moral law of God—or the rule of moral action for his creature man—was, no doubt, clearly written on man's heart, at his first creation—That is, he was so formed that he had a clear perception of his duty, and felt as he ought, his obligations to perform it perfectly. After the fall, this original law of moral duty, was greatly defaced and obliterated by sin. Some faint traces of it, however, seem yet to remain, in the dictates of natural conscience. But as the restoration of man was intended by God, he was graciously pleased to reveal anew his moral law, in all its extent, to his fallen creature.<sup>94</sup>

While Smith agreed with evangelicals (including Witherspoon and Green) that revelation was indispensable for the salvation of the soul and understanding the 'essence of God', he believed these theological concerns involved religious faith not moral conduct.<sup>95</sup>

Consequently, the tone and substance of his sermons and lectures reflected these distinctly different purposes and the needs of his intended audience. To a degree these separate purposes (religious faith and restraining 'passions') overlapped in Smith's treatment of natural religion. For instance, Smith taught:

An enlightened conscience [interchangeable with the 'moral faculty'] imposes the most effectual restraints upon passions, which are the principles of evil in man. It unfolds the law on each case of conduct as it arises, and adds to the prescriptions of duty, the most powerful motives of obedience. Hence it is that *faith*, not, as the enemies of religion assert, a blind belief of uncertain facts, and unintelligent mysteries, but a clear understanding, and firm persuasion of the truths of the gospel, is laid, by the apostles, at the foundation of a good life, and thereby made the condition of our salvation.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Green, *Lectures*, 229.

<sup>95</sup> See Miles Bradbury, 'Samuel Stanhope Smith: Princeton's Accommodation to Reason', *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 48, (1970): 189-202. On understanding the 'essence of the Deity', Smith preached that 'a subject of which it is so far beyond the present powers of the human mind adequately to conceive, it becomes us to speak with modesty and caution. In judging of it, reason affords no lights to guide us—the fires of imagination will only mislead us—we must take our ideas solely from the Scriptures of Truth' (Samuel Stanhope Smith, *Three Discourses*, (Boston, 1791), 342).

<sup>96</sup> Smith, *Discourses*, 322.

For Smith, the perfection of all the faculties of the mind, particularly the ‘moral faculty’, realised God’s design, and, therefore, strengthened religious faith in Biblical Christianity. But his lectures of moral philosophy did not attempt to prove the truthfulness of revelation or support its use as the primary vehicle of morals. Instead, Smith appealed to Reid’s belief that ‘revelation was not intended to supersede, but to aid the use of our natural faculties’.<sup>97</sup> In doing so, Smith claimed that ‘there is no doubt that these principles of our nature are liable to great imperfections and sometimes to gross mistakes, in judging both truth and duty; but they are the best means of directing our conduct and opinions which our Creator hath placed in our power’.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, as a minister, Smith’s sermons guided his congregation toward Christian conversion and, by extension, salvation; as a moral philosopher, he taught methods of exercising innate faculties of the mind as the best way to prepare future virtuous statesmen for public service. As shown in the previous chapter, Smith’s system of moral education sought to create a Princeton Enlightenment rather than preparing young men to guide congregations toward heavenly salvation. This difference between revealed religion and metaphysics accompanied by Princeton’s reformed purpose under Smith’s administration did not escape the attention of Green and like-minded religious revivalists. Before this counter-Enlightenment faction of ministers rallied against his programme, Smith’s lectures of moral philosophy strengthened the ‘Moderate’ interests of tolerance and commitment whilst developing virtue at Princeton.

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<sup>97</sup> Reid, *Active Powers*, 383.

<sup>98</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 312-313.

**The ‘Moral Faculty’ and its Rules of Duty in Smith’s System of Moral Education**

The instinctive rules of duty attached to the ‘moral faculty’ occupied the vast majority of Smith’s lectures of moral philosophy. Their practical applications in public life and central role in creating Enlightenment offer an explanation for the little space afforded to the ‘intellectual powers of the mind’ that appeared in his introductory lecture outlining his philosophical system. Like Dugald Stewart, Smith adapted Reidian themes to the circumstances of his time and the institution in which he taught. For Smith, this entailed strengthening scientific innovation and natural religion as a way to foster an American Enlightenment. Achieving this ambition, however, required facing challenges from an emerging religious revivalist movement, led by Ashbel Green, and the increased activity from unruly students who Smith saw as ‘Jacobins’. Smith believed both factions were extreme representations of their affiliated groups: Presbyterian clergymen and Princeton students. Before exploring how these factions advanced counter-Enlightenment policies at Princeton in the following chapter, this final section will examine how Smith’s applied ethics encouraged cultural and religious tolerance whilst exercising the ‘moral faculty’ as the source of virtue.

The understanding and exercise of virtue in public life occupied a central place in Smith’s moral thought. Of the faculties that supported this aim, the ‘moral faculty’ included the branches of moral duty and the power to judge and exercise virtue. Like Stewart, Smith treated the ‘moral faculty’ as the source of conceptions of duty and obligation, notions of right and wrong, and judgments of merit and demerit.<sup>99</sup> Smith added that ‘besides the conformity of an action to a rule or prescription of law, *right* implies its intrinsic and essential rectitude, as seen and approved by the heart, or moral

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<sup>99</sup> See chapter one, 57-59.

faculty, when no idea of the control, or authority of law is taken into view at the time'.<sup>100</sup> While he treated this faculty as universal amongst humankind, he suggested, like Stewart, that the criterion for notions of 'right and wrong' were not universal.<sup>101</sup> The exercise of the 'moral faculty' therefore enabled agents to be virtuous through fulfilling universal 'moral laws' and rules of duty implanted by God.<sup>102</sup> For Smith, the judgement of these instinctive obligations or 'moral laws' was improved through 'experience and reflection, and especially by profoundly observing the course of human conduct, and tracing its causes, motives, disguises, and consequences'.<sup>103</sup> Central objects of the 'moral faculty' were therefore the judgment and exercise of virtue, particularly of fortitude, patience, temperance, and the moderation of passions, as vital parts of civil society.<sup>104</sup> While these qualities of the 'moral faculty' closely resembled those taught in Stewart's philosophy, Smith expanded upon its application in response to his situation and enlightened ambition for Princeton.

In examining the 'moral faculty', Smith afforded more space to the different ways in which people in particular situations and cultural norms (affected by systems of education and national manners) exercised and judged morals than Stewart had attempted. Smith's tolerance for differing notions of 'right and wrong' opposed 'prejudices [that] have been assiduously fostered, and passions artfully inflamed'.<sup>105</sup> Smith believed that the 'Moderate' value of cultural tolerance was relevant for

<sup>100</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 300-1. According to Reid, 'the testimony of our moral faculty, like that of the external sense, is the testimony of nature, and we have the same reason to rely upon it' (Reid, *Active Powers*, 238).

<sup>101</sup> See chapter one, 57-59.

<sup>102</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 302.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 304.

Princeton's mixture of regional customs amongst its student population and his design for preparing enlightened statesmen whose future concerns would extend to American foreign policies. Despite different cultural beliefs and manners, Smith taught that everyone possessed the same unrefined morals at birth that could be cultivated to 'disentangle' cultural prejudices and vicious behaviour through refining the 'moral faculty'. Since the 'moral faculty' required exercise for its perfection, differing standards of living and values naturally conditioned this faculty in different ways. At the same time, everyone was united through the influence of universal 'moral laws' on the dispositions of virtuous and reflective agents. According to Smith, 'the perception which accompanies these dictates of the moral faculty is that of an intrinsic, essential, and unchangeable rectitude, and excellence in virtue, and of guilt and depravity of vice'.<sup>106</sup> These 'moral laws' affected how virtuous and enlightened men judged the intension of a particular act as evidence of the agent's disposition.<sup>107</sup> In cases where actions did not uniformly coincide with perceptions of 'right and wrong', the faculty of reason corrected false judgments. Smith demonstrated this concept of a moral quasi-relativism by contrasting how some national cultures believe certain religious beliefs to be pious whilst others interpret them as promoting 'meanness and grovelling hypocrisy'.<sup>108</sup> He illustrated this point further in suggesting

The vivacity and excessive complaisance of France, is apt to impress an Englishman with an opinion of frivolity of the nation, which is retaliated by French imputing to the English a savage surliness of character. Nothing can eradicate from the mind of [the] Turk a persuasion of the licentiousness of the manners of Christians, on account of the free intercourse permitted among them between sexes; because in the east, where women are, in a great measure, secluded from public view, such liberties are never seen to take place except among the most profligate part of society; and

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 310.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 314.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.



they are ignorant of the influence of those civil, social, and religious ideas which combine to impress a totally different character on European manners.<sup>109</sup>

Moreover, diversity in manners and culture was displayed across different states of society. Smith's promotion of cultural tolerance did not imply he agreed with beliefs contrary to Christian principles or American 'polite' manners that drew heavily from British standards. Yet he believed that 'we may frequently discern unexpected virtues in the midst of unfavourable appearances; and, often, vice is found to shelter itself under the imposing aspect of virtue'.<sup>110</sup> National cultures that promoted different moral values, therefore, should not prejudice judgments of its citizenry as immoral. Thus, he taught that 'the justice, or benevolence of an act ought to be judged of differently, according to the mutual dependence of men, and their natural expectations from one another, arising out of their social condition, and the habits of their education'.<sup>111</sup> If a particular act adheres to the moral norms of its culture, Smith believed it did not violate an intrinsic 'moral law' if the agent's intentions were moral. He suggested that 'we err in measuring the acts of other men, or the regulations of other nations, by the customs of our own country'.<sup>112</sup> Rather than succumbing to religious and cultural prejudices Smith taught that from cultivating the 'moral faculty' 'we find a solution of that unreasonable bigotry and inheritableness which mark the sentiments of various religious sects towards one another, and of the mutual contempt and aversion of foreign nations'.<sup>113</sup> This certainly reflected the interests of future statesmen not ministers.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 314-315.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 318.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 322.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 323.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 315.

Like Reid and Stewart, Smith taught that the ‘moral faculty’ directed humankind towards their instinctive obligations to God, others, and themselves. While his interpretation of these obligations largely coincided with Reid’s philosophy, his situation at Princeton led him to make certain modifications and additions. For instance, Smith’s active service in the American Presbyterian Church as the elected moderator of its General Assembly in 1799 and as Princeton’s president affected his interpretation of these duties. Beyond examining man’s various duties to God at length in sermons at Princeton, Smith taught that everyone had internal and external obligations to a supreme being. Like Reid, Smith taught that the internal duties entailed ‘love, reverence, and resignation’ to God’s authority, will, and design. In addition to these, Smith believed that an outward expression of these sentiments was equally important for a Christian. By worshipping God in public, agents demonstrated ‘adoration, thanksgiving, confession, and prayer’ which he considered to be universal amongst all Christian sects. He believed that ‘all rites deserve to be regarded with respect which custom has sanctified among any people, and has so associated with their religious ideas as to be to them the most serious and affecting expression of their devotional exercises’.<sup>114</sup> This too demarcated Smith’s promotion of religious tolerance and the diffusion of Christian principles at Princeton. For Smith, fulfilling these duties ‘embrace[d] the whole compass of piety and virtue; because, as they constitute the moral law of the universe prescribed by God, conformity to their dictates is justly regarded as obedience to him’.<sup>115</sup> Within his discussion of these internal and external duties to God, Smith noted that the state of society often reflected its religious practises. In this view, Smith’s system that promoted a union of internal

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<sup>114</sup> Samuel Stanhope Smith, *Lectures*, vol. two, 106.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

(private) and external (public) demonstrations of religious devotion exemplified the function of 'rational' Christianity in Princeton's Enlightenment.

Smith's teaching of the branches of duty or the 'rules of duty' as he preferred to call them, surpassed Reid's applied ethics in terms of the range and extent of their application. The improving elements of a properly governed education appeared throughout his treatment of these instinctive rules as particularly important. For instance, in teaching the duties of parents Smith stressed that parental affections that gratified the desires of their children resulted in idleness and pleasure and, afterwards, 'only links them into insignificance and contempt'.<sup>116</sup> Instead, he taught the maxim

It is education chiefly which makes man what he is; whether it be well, or ill conducted. By education, skilfully applied, the manners, habits, and sentiments of youth may be formed to almost any standard.<sup>117</sup>

This belief complemented his teaching of the 'imitative faculty' and why young men required virtuous and pious examples for instruction.<sup>118</sup> Beyond his immediate purposes for instilling a high value of enlightened education at Princeton, Smith infused politics with the treatment of moral duties. From an abolitionist perspective, Smith questioned if

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 145-146.

<sup>118</sup> Smith taught that the 'imitative faculty' proved useful 'in the formation of manners, and moral habits [as] one of the most powerful principles in human nature', but he cautioned young men to consider carefully whom they imitate (Ibid., 208-209). He suggested that impressionable young men draw from the example of experienced and virtuous men instead of looking to their peers who had 'uncorrected passions'. He warned that this faculty 'is, indeed, liable to pernicious abuse, when young men, yielding to the impulses of their irregular appetites, court only the society of vicious companions who encourage and assist their indulgence; but, in the general state and order of the world, its influence is favourable to virtue; and gives to the useful power of education, under the direction of a wise domestic, or public discipline, its firmest hold upon the heart' (Ibid.). As an active power of the mind, the 'imitative faculty' assisted in the adoption of Smith's system that restrained the practise of disorderly and immoral activities endorsed by 'Jacobins' at Princeton. This measure to counter pernicious activities was, for the most part, followed by his students. In early 1796, Reade commented that 'I have determined to avoid bad company which is the source of all vice...and we can almost always find as many students of good dispositions and abilities as those of evil' (Joseph Reade to his father, 7 February 1796, PUL MS15031). Yet the attractions of greater liberties and the desire for a principled cause of which to defend united a faction of Princetonians to practise 'Jacobin' activities of radical disobedience at the turn of the century. Smith placed a greater emphasis on the effects of associating with immoral men than Reid's earlier writings or Stewart's lectures at this time.

the institution of slavery was moral. According to Smith, ‘men deceive themselves continually by false pretences, in order to justify the slavery which is convenient for them’.<sup>119</sup> Smith’s lecture on this subject drew largely from themes in his earlier *Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure* (1786).<sup>120</sup> While he believed slavery should be condemned and forbidden on moral grounds, he suggested that only a gradual emancipation of slaves would prevent idleness and the vicious consequences that necessarily followed inactivity. For this reason, he argued,

the laws ought, perhaps, to hold out the hope, and the means of freedom to all, yet so as, if possible, to admit those only to a participation of its privileges who shall have previously qualified themselves by good moral and industrious habits, to enjoy it in such a manner as to be beneficial to themselves, and to the state... It is of high public concern that slavery should be gradually corrected, and, at length, if possible, entirely extinguished: for wherever it is incorporated with the institutions of a republic, it will be productive of many moral and political evils.<sup>121</sup>

Until 1804, New Jersey permitted slavery and a large number of Princeton students were from southern plantation states.<sup>122</sup> In this situation, his support for the abolition of slavery was certainly controversial.<sup>123</sup> Contrary to Smith, Jefferson (whose thought greatly influenced Republican beliefs) did not ‘imagine a racially or even an ethnically pluralistic America’ whilst at the same time believing that the inequalities of slavery were not morally justifiable.<sup>124</sup> Smith’s unique adaptation of Reid’s practical ethics did not garner much attention presumably due to his earlier work on the subject. Of his more

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>120</sup> See chapter four, 158-163.

<sup>121</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, vol. two, 174, 177.

<sup>122</sup> See Graham Russell Hodges, *Root & Branch: African Americans in New York & East Jersey, 1613-1863*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 168.

<sup>123</sup> Matthew Mason suggests that American slavery was prominent in transatlantic politics in the years leading up to the War of 1812 (Matthew Mason, ‘The Battle of the Slaveholding Liberators: Great Britain, the United States, and Slavery in the Early Nineteenth Century’, *WMQ*, 59:3, (July 2002): 678.

<sup>124</sup> See Ari Helo and Peter Onuf, ‘Jefferson, Morality, and the Problem of Slavery’, *WMQ*, 60:3, (July 2003): 614.

controversial lectures at the time, Smith's promotion of cultural tolerance in treating the rules or obligations of marriage heightened Green's scrutiny of Smith's philosophy in 1804. The circumstances of this tension and its consequences will receive further attention in the following chapter.

### **Conclusion**

American political and religious tensions in the years that followed the French Revolution rendered American colleges vulnerable to radicalism. Consequently, Evangelical clergymen feared that young men would adopt atheistic principles in their pursuit of further liberties. The next chapter will show that these separate interests assumed radical forms at Princeton. Smith identified times of conflict as particularly conducive toward enterprising activities of moral and scientific innovation. Yet, to Smith, the advancements that improved the human condition through perfecting the mind and society should be governed by practises of enlightened moderation.

Smith's system of moral education was the vehicle for this Princeton Enlightenment. At the centre of this programme, Smith's lectures of moral philosophy taught methods of developing virtuous habits, and they strengthened obligations to diffuse the 'Moderate' values of cultural and religious tolerance. In responding to, as he saw it, student idleness and overindulged passions, Smith taught that the cultivation of the 'moral faculty' would create future virtuous and enlightened statesmen. In this process, Smith advanced original adaptations of Reid's treatment of the 'moral faculty' and the rules of duty that sprung from its source. These adaptations reflected the circumstances and situation at Princeton.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Smith encountered an unprecedented number of student disruptions that threatened the security of the College and the

continued practise of his system of moral education. Smith believed these student outbursts of radical disobedience, violence, and destruction was the result of a small faction of 'Jacobins'. Ashbel Green and like-minded religious revivalists such as Samuel Miller and Archibald Alexander believed this faction was the result of Smith's failure properly to diffuse Christian principles. The struggle between these two interpretations of student disruptions and how best to prevent future acts of youthful defiance exemplified tensions between Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy and counter-Enlightenment interests at Princeton.

## Chapter Six

### **Princeton's War of 1812: Student riots, religious revivalism, and the end of Samuel Stanhope Smith's system of moral education**

In the years following the end of the American Revolution, Samuel Stanhope Smith wrote that 'our freedom certainly takes away the distinctions of rank that are so visible in Europe; and of consequence takes away, in the same proportion, those submissive forms of politeness that exist here'.<sup>1</sup> At Princeton, this social change emerged with an unwelcomed contribution to Princeton's history of fostering religious and political revolutionary spirit from its students. On several occasions, an influential faction of Princeton students challenged College rules with unprecedented displays of vandalism, riotous protests, physical and verbal assaults of tutors, and protests against traditional Princeton conventions. As Steven Novak has shown, student disruptions such as these were not exclusive to Princeton at this time with similar incidents occurring at William and Mary, Dartmouth, Dickinson, and Yale.<sup>2</sup>

Novak suggests:

Though long-range trends contributed to student unrest, the rise of campus revolt itself came not gradually but quite suddenly, during the national crisis of 1798. The crisis both mobilized the young and altered the meaning of youthful disorders. After the turn of the century student unrest was no longer calmly attributed to the "influence of the first lapse" but was perceived as "the product of vice and irreligion".<sup>3</sup>

While this kind of youthful uprising and its perceived meaning were largely shared throughout the republic, Princeton produced two different responses to this phenomenon:

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<sup>1</sup> Smith to Charles Nisbet, 4 February 1785, quoted in Michael Kraus, 'Charles Nisbet and Samuel Stanhope Smith—Two Eighteenth Century Educators', *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, 6, (Nov., 1944), 26.

<sup>2</sup> Steven Novak, *The Rights of Youth: American Colleges and Student Revolt, 1798-1815*, (HUP, 1977), 95-156. Pauline Maier has shown that American popular uprisings also happened earlier in the eighteenth century, however, these earlier episodes were not dominated by America's youth as it was around the turn of the nineteenth century (Pauline Maier, 'Popular Uprisings and Civil Authority in Eighteenth-Century America', *WMQ*, 27:1, (January 1970): 3-35).

<sup>3</sup> Novak, *The Rights of Youth*, 15.

one being radical and the other moderate. Ashbel Green and like-minded religious revivalists credited this prolonged surge of youthful revolt at Princeton as the result of Stanhope Smith's system of moral education. Smith's reforms of the curriculum in creating the Princeton Enlightenment (which was based on natural religion and metaphysics) rendered his system vulnerable to objections that it did not properly address irreligion. As shown in the previous chapter, Smith's system of moral education sought to restrain immoral 'passions' and cultivate virtuous habits by exercising the 'moral and active powers of the mind', with particular attention to the 'moral faculty' and its rules of duty. The rise of student misconduct at Princeton did not shake this conviction but rather reaffirmed Smith's belief that his system of moral education should be enhanced with expanded course offerings in branches of 'liberal science'. Contrary to Smith's system, Green believed unruly young men required proper instruction in the Gospels. Attentive studies of divine revelation, in turn, would allegedly strengthen the attachment to morals and civil society. Green's efforts to renew Princeton's diffusion of Christian principles exemplified the beginning of wider American efforts to revive the Christian faith. This chapter examines the tension between these Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment approaches of addressing youthful rebellion: a revival of Christian religious principles led by Green and, in contrast, an expansion of Smith's system of moral education.

Gordon Wood suggests that 'between 1798 and 1808 American colleges were racked by mounting incidents of student defiance and outright rebellion—on a scale never seen before or since in American history'.<sup>4</sup> While this wave of student disruptions was not reducible to one cause, student adoption of 'Jacobin' principles (as Smith saw it) and notions of patriotism (associated with Jeffersonian-Republican beliefs) were central factors to its emergence at Princeton. The ideological wars of their fathers (particularly

<sup>4</sup> Gordon Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815*, (OUP, 2009), 323.



the War of Independence and the Federalist debates) rendered this generation of young men in search of a purpose and cause of their own to champion. This desire, coupled with the circumstances of the time and their situation at Princeton, resulted in a vacuum for radical activism. For a faction of bold students, the ideals of liberty, insofar as student rights were concerned, were greatly limited by Princeton rules and traditions.

Consequently, this faction of 'Jacobins' waged war against Princeton's authority between 1800 and 1807. While a small faction of students started these uprisings, their cause proved contagious amongst the student population. According to Thomas Edwards (then a Princeton student), the 'senior class [of 1802] is the most disorderly one ever in College: they are denominated [sic] by the doctor [Smith], the Jacobins'.<sup>5</sup> In the months and years that followed this assessment, Princeton 'Jacobins' became increasingly radical in their pursuit for expanded student liberties. Smith credited 'Jacobin' factions with the 1802 destruction of the College edifice (Nassau Hall) and the 1807 'Great Rebellion', in which, for a brief time, students (who appealed to Jeffersonian-Republican ideals) assumed control of the College. These episodes weakened the trustees' confidence in Smith's system of moral education and its purpose of Enlightenment. Princeton's Board of Trustees gradually favoured Ashbel Green's belief that Princeton under Smith's Enlightenment suffered from irreligion. This threat provided the necessary traction for Green to advance his resolution of reviving Witherspoon's so-called 'republican Christian Enlightenment' with a renewed focus on training future ministers and diffusing Evangelical principles.

Attention to Smith's and Green's different approaches of discouraging student uprisings suggests that this issue was a catalyst for underlying tensions between Scottish Enlightenment thought and American religious revivalism. While religious revivalism

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Edwards to Nicholas Biddle, 29 January 1802, PUL C1289 MS12822.

and student rebellions harboured contrary agendas, they converged in challenging Smith's system of moral education. The intended and unintended effects from these movements against the purpose of the Princeton Enlightenment will be discussed in two sections. The first examines Smith's response to student disruptions between 1800 and 1807. The final section explores the reasons why Ashbel Green led a campaign to remove Smith's system of moral education. In addressing these areas, this chapter suggests reasons why Green's campaign was successful and how he measured this victory by Smith's 1812 resignation, the 1812 establishment of Princeton's Theological Seminary, and, most revealing, his adaptation of Witherspoon's 'republican Christian Enlightenment' in creating Princeton's second age of religious revivalism from 1812 to 1822.

### **'Jacobins' at Princeton: Student disruptions and rebellion, 1800-1807**

From its 1746 establishment, the College of New Jersey maintained control of the student body with a hierarchical system of authority. While the College president governed on-campus affairs, his power and the curriculum required approval by the Board of Trustees.<sup>6</sup> Of the twenty-four elected members of this Board, the Charter stipulated that they represent an equal mixture of alumni from secular (twelve) and ecclesiastical professions (twelve).<sup>7</sup> Yet the composition and interests of the Board drastically changed between 1805 and 1807 with the appointment of six new trustees who sympathised with religious revivalism. This change had a bearing on Smith's system of moral education and how Princeton officials responded to so-called 'Jacobin' activities.

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<sup>6</sup> Maclean, *HCNJ*, 83.

<sup>7</sup> The Second Charter of Incorporation of the Trustees of the College of New Jersey 1748, PUA AC120.

Before these new appointments, the Board (which included Smith's father and younger brother) overwhelmingly supported Smith's system of moral education. The Board's support for creating the Princeton Enlightenment did not imply, however, that they neglected the religious interests of the College. Instead, it reflected their confidence in Smith who drew heavily from the Scottish Enlightenment's example of mixing philosophical truths with Calvinism. In a letter to Rush, Smith wrote that 'you and I are continually mingling religious with philosophical inquiries and as you have dared to depart so far from the orthodoxy of public opinion, forgive me if my mind should also revolve in an exocentric orbit'.<sup>8</sup> His 'mingling' of philosophy and religion did not alarm Princeton's trustees (apart from Green) during the first five years of his administration. Thus, Princeton's faculty and trustees were united under Smith's leadership when a faction of 'Jacobins' first emerged in the winter of 1800. While student unrest often followed the end of a long winter season, the increase of the student population added another element of stress to this season of confinement.<sup>9</sup>

During the winter of 1800, three seniors (who were considered influential amongst their peers) protested against the required assembly for morning prayer. As shown in chapter five, Smith taught that group prayer was an instinctive duty to God as part of humankind's external obligation to God, expressed through public worship.<sup>10</sup> Students justified this protest by complaining that the College chapel was too cold during the winter months and, as such, the faculty should not require students to endure this discomfort.<sup>11</sup> While this objection appeared reasonable enough, their style of unyielding

<sup>8</sup> Smith to Rush, February 1792, PUL MS14429.

<sup>9</sup> Noll, *Princeton and the Republic*, 221-225.

<sup>10</sup> See chapter five, 199-200.

<sup>11</sup> TM, 9 April 1800, 39.

protest, the fact they were opposing an aspect of Christianity as well as Smith's system, and their reactions to the punishment that followed all proved significant. Smith submitted the student demands to the trustees. After that, all three seniors were suspended. In response to this punishment, there were unspecified disturbances in Nassau Hall; students also refused to follow the College's digest. After several days, Smith managed to suppress these disruptions with the threat of expulsion. Of the seniors who were originally suspended, one returned early from suspension only to spur further insurrection. Agden Edwards, a senior from Connecticut, 'returned and violently assaulted one of the tutors'.<sup>12</sup> While the circumstances that motivated this assault were unclear, the use of violence coupled with their earlier protests against an aspect of organised religion led Smith to brand Edwards and his associates as 'Jacobins'.<sup>13</sup> The nature of Edwards's actions resulted in his immediate expulsion. But his loyal confidants who banded together in the earlier protest remained at Princeton. In an 1802 letter to a trustee (Jonathan Baynard), Smith wrote:

You have heard me speak of a young man who about two years ago, attempted to excite an insurrection on jacobistic and anti-religious principles. Since his expulsion, a small sect has still been left in the College, which has lately obtained some augmentation of numbers from the progress of passions very natural to the human heart, and from the encouragement given such opinions by the state of public morals. I am told that hostility to religion and moral order has been among their chief characteristics, but covered with great secrecy till very lately.<sup>14</sup>

Edwards's expulsion from Princeton did not end his radical activities as a student. In 1802, he was active in a student rebellion at the College of William and Mary. According to Smith, 'the same young man of whom I have spoken is now finishing his law studies at the College of William and Mary and has lately been principally concerned in an insurrection against the authority of that institution, which was before sufficiently relaxed

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> See Noah Webster's definition of a 'Jacobin' in chapter five, 183-184.

<sup>14</sup> Smith to Jonathan Baynard, 10 March 1802, PUL MS2164.

in accommodation to general manners and opinions'.<sup>15</sup> William and Mary's leniency toward their government of young men, in comparison to Princeton's more rigid rules, suggests that particular rules meant little to the alleged 'Jacobin' agenda of opposing anyone who claimed authority over their perceived liberties. Smith wrote that 'the insurgents obliged the faculty to re-nounce the right of interrogating a student on any part of his conduct or his studies; in the exultation of their victory over old prejudices it is said they broke into the church, and took out the bible and burnt it'.<sup>16</sup> While this unverified act of burning a bible was believed to be symbolic of the 'Jacobins' association with irreligion, it paled in comparison to the later destruction at Princeton. The faction of 'Jacobins' that Edwards left in his wake at Princeton would later use more extreme means to accomplish their demands for further student liberties.

The looming threat of student insurrection cast a dark shadow over Princeton at the start of the new academic year. On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1801, Edward Thomas wrote that 'I fear very much for the order of the College this session...the spirit of idleness seemed very general during the last and mischief is always a necessary consequence of nonattendance to studies'.<sup>17</sup> The requisite time spent in class, study, at chapel, and the elective participation in the literary societies functioned as an indispensable part of Smith's system to cultivate virtuous habits whilst removing opportunities for idleness as a gateway for immoral passions.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, Smith drew a correlation between 'Jacobin'

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Edward Thomas to Nicholas Biddle, 22 November 1801, PUL C1289.

<sup>18</sup> Life at Princeton offered some permissible diversions in the public sphere from the strenuous course work. Smith permitted students to attend the theatre in Philadelphia and encouraged participation in the two literary societies. Shortly after Witherspoon's 1768 arrival, students reformed the 'Well-Meaning' and 'Plain-Dealing' social clubs, which were suspended by the trustees after the 1766 death of Samuel Finley (Maclean, *HCNJ*, vol. 1, 364). The foundation of the American Whig and Cliosophic literary societies, that replaced the former clubs, served as forums for debate and socialising. As a student in 1769, Smith contributed to transforming the former Plain-Dealing Club into the American Whig

activities and students who did not adopt his system of moral education. 'Jacobins' were therefore believed by Smith to be a part of a radicalised type of counter-Enlightenment in the context of the Princeton Enlightenment. Yet Thomas's premonition of an imminent student rebellion would prove correct in the months that followed.

During the 1801 College recess for Christmas, five students (who were believed to harbour 'Jacobin' beliefs) were reported to be drunk and the cause of unspecified forms of disruptive conduct at Princeton.<sup>19</sup> When classes resumed after the break, Smith suspended them.<sup>20</sup> Six students petitioned Smith to reconsider the suspension of four of the students. Smith and the trustees denied this petition, which they considered to be an example of 'disrespectful' defiance of their judgement. Following this decision, these students submitted a second petition in which they denied any affiliation with 'Jacobinism'.<sup>21</sup> In light of earlier events, this added disclaimer suggests that Princeton officials believed a faction of 'Jacobins' still existed, and, moreover, that the students had knowledge of this belief. Unwilling to overturn their decision, the second petition was also dismissed. The following day, an unspecified number of students rioted and vowed not to fulfil their College duties until the suspended students were readmitted. This marked the second time within two years that students rebelled against College authority as a means to achieve their demands. Moreover, this form of radical protest was a

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Society (Maclean, *HCMJ*, vol. 2, 136). Edward Thomas remarked that 'the advantages of the Societies and their libraries together with the convenience for study will prove greater to the students than can be derived at any other place' (Edward Thomas to Nicholas Biddle, 27 February 1802, PUL C1289). During the Revolution, both societies advanced support for American independence. In post-revolutionary America, the American Whig and Cliosophic societies provided members with a forum for political debate, albeit restricted to Princeton's campus, which Smith also entertained in his moral philosophy course. Despite Smith and the trustees' support for the Federalist Party, Princeton did not exclude or silence students who adopted Republican sentiments. Student support for 'Jacobin' activities, however, was not tolerated.

<sup>19</sup> Faculty Minutes 31 December 1801.

<sup>20</sup> FM 1 January 1802.

<sup>21</sup> FM 2 January 1802.

defining characteristic of so-called ‘Jacobins’. In revealing their demands, these Princeton ‘Jacobins’ delivered a third petition requesting ‘mildness in administrating the Laws’, and, if fulfilled, *they* would re-establish order to the College.<sup>22</sup> On 29<sup>th</sup> January 1802, Thomas Edwards remarked:

I cannot say I was much surprised in being informed by it, of the rebellion at College. The disposition to disorder was very evident, before our departure and I am very happy to hear it has not broken out in a more violent manner. If the faculty had not in some measure yielded to them much greater lengths would have been taken.<sup>23</sup>

The threat of preventable violence convinced Smith not to uphold his principled stance against ‘Jacobin’ activities. Of these activities, the rigorous defence of those punished became an expected practise at Princeton. Smith later wrote that ‘one of their [Jacobin] principles, I am confidently assured has been that no falsehood is criminal or to be declined that will protect a companion from discovery or punishment’.<sup>24</sup> For Smith, these so-called ‘falsehoods’ were misdirected values that contradicted the maxims advanced in his lectures of moral philosophy. While ‘Jacobins’ utilised the terror of violent insurrection as a means to secure their demands, they remained defensive in their opposition to Princeton’s authority until March 1802. Two months after this student rebellion, a faction of ‘Jacobins’ orchestrated the most damaging act of Princeton’s history.

On 6<sup>th</sup> March 1802, a fire rapidly consumed the College edifice (Nassau Hall) at one o’clock in the afternoon whilst most students ate in the dinning hall. This fire claimed over three thousand books in the library, destroyed the majority of the philosophical apparatuses, and reduced Nassau to a burnt frame.<sup>25</sup> According to Smith, the ruin of

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Edwards to Biddle, 29 January 1802, PUL C1289.

<sup>24</sup> Smith to Baynard, 10 March 1802, PUL MS2164.

<sup>25</sup> Maclean, *HCNJ*, 32.

Princeton's edifice 'may only be construed into a triumph of [Jacobin] principle'. He continued:

Circumstances strongly lead to the belief that the fire was communicated by design, although no direct proof of the fact can be obtained. It is not doubted however by those who are best acquainted with the whole state of opinions here that it is one effect of those irreligious and demoralling [sic] principles which are tearing the bands of society asunder, and threatening in the end to overturn our country. It is thought highly probable that they have depraved the mind of some young lad connected with them or even more than one, 10 as, at length, to become capable of the dreadful act of setting fire to the college without being sensible of its enormity.<sup>26</sup>

Afterwards, the Board of Trustees commissioned internal committees that oversaw the immediate repair of Nassau (led by Smith) and an investigative committee to determine the cause of the fire, which despite the recent student disruptions, was not conclusively linked to nefarious agents.<sup>27</sup> Richard Stockton and John Beatty reported that 'those who were first at the place where it made its appearance they are of opinion that the edifice of the College was *intentionally set on fire*'.<sup>28</sup> Students and servants reported smelling a strong scent of turpentine before they witnessed smoke escaping from inside the roof's trapdoor.<sup>29</sup> The flames (which swiftly engulfed the roof) would not have progressed so swiftly in such powerful winds without the use of an accelerant fuel.<sup>30</sup> Despite the evidence that suggested arson, the investigation did not discover the guilty party. Although the Board could not prove that 'Jacobins' had a part in the fire, they prevented the return of five students (William Cooper, Ushum [first name unknown], William Burhenm, Willey Jones, and Pratt Wilson) whom they believed had encouraged the

<sup>26</sup> Smith to Baynard, 10 March 1802, PUL MS2164.

<sup>27</sup> On 6<sup>th</sup> December 1795, the Princeton's grammar school caught fire at midnight and 'Dr. Smith was very much frightened as it was next to his house'. In this earlier fire, some 'ill descrawing fellow' set fire to a pinecone placed between the roof and beams (Reade to his father, 6 December 1795, PUL C1272).

<sup>28</sup> TM, 7 March 1802, 62.

<sup>29</sup> TM, 16 March 1802, 63.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



‘immoralities, disorders and combinations which prevailed among some of the students’.<sup>31</sup> The expulsion of this suspected faction of ‘Jacobins’ suggests that Smith and the Board were convinced that ‘Jacobins’ had caused the destruction of Nassau Hall. Without a building for classes and a place for student accommodation, the trustees were forced to close the College temporarily. Apart from expelling alleged ‘Jacobins’, the Trustees and Smith used this time to create policies that were intended to safeguard the College against future attacks. When classes resumed the following autumn students were required to pledge: ‘I will not enter into any combination, classically or generally, to oppose the authority of the College’.<sup>32</sup> In addition, students were not permitted to enter the tavern or places where ‘groceries of any kind [particularly alcohol] are sold’.<sup>33</sup> Interestingly, this pledge sought to remove the elements of ‘Jacobinism’ by strengthening the source of their complaints: restrictions of student liberties.

The Board recognised that the 1802 fire weakened the public’s confidence in a Princeton education. In the weeks that followed the fire, trustees circulated letters describing Princeton’s commitment to teaching enlightened and religious principles.<sup>34</sup> In doing so, they stressed that the emergence of ‘Jacobins’ was not exclusive to Princeton, but rather Princeton ‘Jacobins’ (who had been expelled) represented an example of wider youthful uprisings across all American institutions of higher education.<sup>35</sup> Sharing this belief, Smith wrote that ‘these, my friend, are some signs of the days which are coming upon us’.<sup>36</sup> The trustees vowed ‘hereafter to correct the ill consequences’ that spring from

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<sup>31</sup> TM, 19 March 1802, 69.

<sup>32</sup> Maclean, *HCNJ*, 40-1.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Joseph Bloomfield to the General Assembly, 19 March 1802, quoted in TM, 69.

<sup>35</sup> Circular letter to parents and trustees, 19 March 1802, in TM, 69-71.

<sup>36</sup> Smith to Baynard, 10 March 1802, PUL MS2164.

overindulged 'passions' by enhancing Smith's system of moral education with further support.<sup>37</sup> Smith's lectures of moral philosophy and his Sunday sermons were central in fulfilling this objective.

As previously shown, Smith excelled in times of adversity and conflict. Similar to his earlier efforts during and after the American Revolution, he rallied support from alumni.<sup>38</sup> By describing the destruction of Nassau Hall as an attack against religion and enlightened education, he suggested that Princetonians needed to take an ideological stance against this threat. At the same time, he believed this conflict with 'Jacobins' was an opportunity for improvement.<sup>39</sup> Four days after Nassau had burnt, and whilst its remains were still smoking, Smith wrote:

The College of Princeton will be immediately rebuilt, probably in a better state than it was, its discipline rendered still more strenuous and exact to meet the spirit of the times. Subscriptions are already opened for the purpose, with uncommon zeal and liberality. The friends of religion and of old principles seem to be touched and engaged as far as the cities of Phil. and N. York.<sup>40</sup>

Through the following autumn, Smith solicited support for the repairs and further improvements to the College. In support of this cause, he joined Reverend Henry Kollock on a fundraising tour that covered the 'southern states in various directions'.<sup>41</sup> Despite being robbed of \$300 along with his trunk outside of Richmond, his trip raised considerable donations.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, Princeton alumni such as Congressman Jonathan Dayton and Vice-President Aaron Burr contributed and solicited funds from

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<sup>37</sup> Circular in TM, 69-71. Meanwhile, the trustees once again identified students' unrestricted access to money as problematic to Princeton's moral and civil order.

<sup>38</sup> See discussion of Smith's post-revolutionary fundraising efforts in chapter four, 158.

<sup>39</sup> See Smith's discussion on the benefits of war in chapter five, 188-189.

<sup>40</sup> Smith to Baynard, 10 March 1802, PUL MS2164.

<sup>41</sup> Smith of Nicholas Biddle, 5 October 1802, PUL C0028 .

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Edwards to Biddle, 19 December 1802, PUL C1289 .

Washington.<sup>43</sup> Across the Atlantic, John Erskine (a prominent Scottish Whig) donated thirty books to Princeton and persuaded his Edinburgh network of friends to do the same.<sup>44</sup> Dugald Stewart responded by sending Princeton his *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, *Life of Thomas Reid*, and a copy of Reid's *Inquiry*.<sup>45</sup> On 27<sup>th</sup> September 1804, Smith announced 'the perfect restoration of the College Edifice lately destroyed by fire, with many improvements in its structure calculated to guard against a like calamity in future'.<sup>46</sup> In addition to repairing and improving Nassau, Smith oversaw the building of new teaching halls that surrounded Nassau. Smith's decisive actions to reaffirm moral discipline and reform Princeton's public image appeared successful if measured by the \$44,317.86 in donations that resulted from this campaign.<sup>47</sup>

From Nassau's ashes and burnt remains, Smith furthered his ambition for Enlightenment at Princeton. Smith wrote that 'in comparing the circumstances of the College at the period when they lately solicited the public liberality in its favor, with its present state, they cannot but be deeply affected by the contrast which they witness'.<sup>48</sup> When classes resumed only ninety-one students (half of the 1802 student population) returned to continue their studies.<sup>49</sup> While Smith's tensions with 'Jacobins' for a time threatened Princeton's security and reputation, Smith successfully channelled this conflict as a cause to expand his system of moral education. Afterwards, Princeton once again became known as an institution of moral improvement, 'liberal science', and a beacon for

<sup>43</sup> Smith to Jonathan Dayton, 5 April 1802, PUL C0028; Smith to Aaron Burr, 2 January 1804, PUL C0028.

<sup>44</sup> Maclean, *HCNJ*, 50-51.

<sup>45</sup> MacIntyre, *Dugald Stewart*, 111.

<sup>46</sup> TM, 27 September 1804, 148.

<sup>47</sup> Maclean, *History*, 52.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

American Enlightenment with just shy of 200 students by the following academic year. But this success would not last. William Hudnut suggests that 'from this moment on, the trustees began meddling in the affairs of the college and enacting a long series of petty disciplinary regulations that served only to exacerbate the hostility between the governors and the governed, with President Smith caught helplessly in the middle'.<sup>50</sup>

In the years that followed, the Princeton Enlightenment caused the student population to swell to the unprecedented number of two hundred in 1806.<sup>51</sup> Similar to years past, the expansion of Smith's system of moral education (particularly in the natural sciences), attracted new students who sought a practical and enlightened education. In an 1805 letter to David Ramsey, Smith wrote:

When I was in Carolina in several conversations you urged the importance of overturning our attention in this institution more extensively to Natural Science in general, than has been usual in this country. Our present Faculty are all men of ardent minds, of no inconsiderable knowledge & of liberal taste. Professors Maclean, Kollock, Hunter, & Thompson concur with me in every exertion of which our finances will admit, for the advancement of every science, & of natural science particularly, in this institution.<sup>52</sup>

Yet as Princeton's student population increased, concerns over 'Jacobin' factions resurfaced. On this possibility, the professor of language William Thompson wrote that 'the increase of these classes more and more convinces me that the public opinion is in favour of their confinement during a certain portion of the day'.<sup>53</sup>

As Princeton's Enlightenment attracted young men from across the union a significant number of these incoming and continuing students mirrored the political and

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<sup>50</sup> William Hudnut III, 'Samuel Stanhope Smith: Enlightened Conservative', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 17:4, (Oct., 1956): 542.

<sup>51</sup> See Mark Noll, 'Before the Storm: Life at Princeton College, 1806-1807,' *PULC*, 42 (1981): 145-64.

<sup>52</sup> Smith to David Ramsey, 29 September 1805, PUL MS239.

<sup>53</sup> Thompson to Green, 15 May 1804, PUL MS9024. As discussed in chapter four, the chief reason for Thompson's election was the teaching of French, a course largely discontinued at other American colleges but highly useful for future statesmen (See chapter four, 160-161).

ideological positions of Jeffersonian-Republicans.<sup>54</sup> For Federalists (including Smith), Jeffersonian-Republicans were often associated with ‘Jacobins’ and ‘French impiety’.<sup>55</sup>

In an 1802 letter to Jonathan Dayton discussing Jeffersonian-Republicans, Smith wrote:

I am afraid the present [Jefferson] administration is preparing the way to deliver us over from one hot headed & furious faction to another, till we are torn asunder, or, like France, sink under the power of one despot who will come to save us from the more dreadful will of a million. Good men will be obliged to retire from public affairs and blockheads & villains will soon hold the rein & scourge over us. May the patricians yet be able to save the republic when the tribunes shall have urged it to the brink of ruin!<sup>56</sup>

Princeton Federalists feared that the diffusion of Jeffersonian-Republican principles (believed to be misled by ‘false’ philosophy and radicalism) would cause civil and moral disorder at Princeton and throughout the republic.<sup>57</sup> While Smith endorsed Federalist sentiments in the classroom and from the pulpit, he did not ban Republican discussions amongst students. This political party tension festered from the mid-1790s only to surface in 1807 at Princeton.

The increased student population of over two hundred young men brought overcrowded classrooms and additional pressure on the professors and tutors to maintain control. The disparity between the number of faculty and students once again resulted in discipline problems. In response, Smith decreed ‘that all the tutors be not absent from the building at the same time, that disorders be not invited by the entire dereliction of the

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<sup>54</sup> See Carl Prince, *New Jersey's Jeffersonian Republicans: the Genesis of an Early Party Machine, 1789-1817*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1964). Susan Dunn argues that ‘whereas one Jefferson advocated periodic rebellion if not periodic revolution, another Jefferson perceived that the healthy synthesis of experience and experiment would make revolution superfluous’ (Susan Dunn, ‘Revolutionary Men of Letters and the Pursuit of Radical Change: The Views of Burke, Tocqueville, Adams, Madison, and Jefferson’, *WMQ*, 53:4, (October 1996): 754.

<sup>55</sup> See chapter five, 182-183.

<sup>56</sup> Smith to Jonathan Dayton, 22 December 1802, PUL C0028.

<sup>57</sup> See John Howe, ‘Republican Thought and the Political Violence of the 1790s’, *American Quarterly*, 19, (1967): 147-165.

house'.<sup>58</sup> The close proximity of students to each other (particularly during the winter months) assisted the circulation of radical political ideas. Thomas Jefferson's principles of government found an eager audience amongst Princeton students as well as opposition from Federalists who viewed him as a deist and 'Jacobin'.<sup>59</sup> In his 1801 Inaugural Address, Jefferson declared an 'absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority, the vital principle of republics, from which is no appeal but to force, the vital principle and immediate parent of despotism'.<sup>60</sup> William Meade, then a Junior from Virginia who shared a room with several other students, claimed Jefferson's 'poetic' public addresses furthered his support for the Republican principles of his administration.<sup>61</sup> Many students who shared this belief viewed Princeton's government as anti-republican. Meanwhile, the constant presence of professors and tutors did not prevent student disobedience. From September 1806 to March 1807, the faculty deliberated over seventeen cases of student misconduct.<sup>62</sup> According to John Maclean Sr., the students 'behaved very badly all this session and...in consequence several have been suspended'.<sup>63</sup> The recent memory of the Princeton 'Jacobins' certainly played a part in Maclean's conviction that student

<sup>58</sup> TM, 25 September 1806, 107.

<sup>59</sup> In a 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1804 letter to Nicholas Biddle, Thomas Edwards remarked that 'I am almost induced to think both that letter and dedication of his Ecclesiastical History to Jefferson as base, democratic forgery. It is apical to dedicate such a subject to a deist' (PUL C1289). The Embargo Act of 1807 that led to the War of 1812 with Britain proved controversial and widely discussed amongst Princeton students. This Act (ratified by Congress on 22 December 1807) came in response to British and French attacks against American merchant ships. On these policies see Francis Cogliano, *Revolutionary America, 1763-1815: A Political History*, second edition, (London: Routledge, 2009), 235-242. On the presence of Jeffersonian-Republicans in New Jersey see Carl Prince, *New Jersey's Jeffersonian Republicans: the Genesis of an Early Party Machine, 1789-1817*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1964).

<sup>60</sup> Thomas Jefferson's Inaugural Address on 4 March 1801, in *Jefferson: Political Writings*, edited by Joyce Appleby and Terence Ball, (CUP, 1999), 175.

<sup>61</sup> William Meade to his mother on 19 November 1806 and February 1807 quoted in *Memoir of the Life of the Right Rev. William Meade, D.D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, (Baltimore, 1867), 18-19.

<sup>62</sup> FM 29 September 1806 to 30 March 1807.

<sup>63</sup> John Maclean to Ashbel Green, 3 April 1807, PUL MS12175.

suspensions were ‘not being found sufficient’ and requested the trustees to ‘purge the College of its unruly members’.<sup>64</sup> Yet this measure came too late.

In the last week of March 1807, three students (Francis Cummins [a senior], Henry Hyde [a junior], and Francis Matteus [a sophomore]) were suspended for separate transgressions of Princeton rules. On 24<sup>th</sup> March, Cummins was discovered intoxicated and belligerent towards Princeton citizens.<sup>65</sup> Later that week, Hyde received suspension for verbally assaulting a tutor (Alexander Monteith) after he intervened in a dorm room disturbance.<sup>66</sup> On the same day, Maclean encountered ‘insolent’ behaviour from Matteus after he discovered alcohol in his room.<sup>67</sup> He too was suspended. The following day on 31<sup>st</sup> March the student body rallied in support of these suspended students. Maclean remarked:

Soon after three young men were suspended and that justly if ever were conscious to themselves they would be sent away to raise a commotion and the consequence was a petition or remonstrance couched in the most impertinent terms was presented to the faculty demanding the immediate reinstatement of these young men, with an intimation that the future conduct of the students would be regulated by what we should resolve--we were unanimously of opinion that by the fundamental laws of the institution we could not suffer the students to interfere in the government.<sup>68</sup>

Similar to the student petitions of 1800 and 1802, students challenged the faculty’s judgment in executing punishments. Yet this demonstration was no mere faction of the student population, upwards of 160 students signed the petition. This staggering majority of students presented different considerations than the earlier handful of alleged ‘Jacobins’. Although a number of rebelling students included young men of Federalist families, the petition reflected Jeffersonian-Republican notions of liberty, republicanism,

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> FM 25 March 1807.

<sup>66</sup> FM 30 March 1807.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Maclean to Green, 3 April 1807, PUL MS12175.

and honour. The students claimed 'a right to resist or even overthrow' an unjust government that did not adhere to the demands of its citizens.<sup>69</sup> This belief challenged Smith's moral philosophy. He encouraged that students defend their liberties, if threatened, within the established tribunal system of a civil society.<sup>70</sup> Since Princeton's Board of Trustees and its faculty members enforced its own rules of government, rebelling students treated the institution as a sovereign nation within which student liberties were greatly limited. Unwilling to permit the undermining of his system of moral education, Smith taught that 'the prevention of crimes may generally be attempted with the most favourable hopes of success by providing for the good education of the citizens, by protecting and encouraging religion, and by the salutary example of the public justice'.<sup>71</sup> This task required punishing the obstruction of justice and, ultimately, denying the students' 1807 petition.

The trustee Richard Stockton, who was visiting at the time, addressed the student body at the evening prayer with the threat that anyone who defied College authority in the form of petitions or otherwise would be suspended.<sup>72</sup> Following this speech, Smith requested that students individually withdraw their complaints as he called their names. Instead, he was interrupted with 'shouting and yelling' as he witnessed 126 students turn their backs to him as they walked toward the chapel exit.<sup>73</sup> In response, Smith declared 'to the students that those who were going out in this riotous manner were now suspended from the College'.<sup>74</sup> Of those who assembled, only thirty-five students remained to

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<sup>69</sup> TM, 10 April 1807, 199.

<sup>70</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 230.

<sup>71</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, vol. two, 225.

<sup>72</sup> FM 31 March 1807.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*



withdraw their names from the petition.<sup>75</sup> One of those who rebelled (William Meade) later reflected:

At the end of four or five months an unfortunate difference between the Faculty and some of the students arose, which produced a general petition from the latter to the former. Myself and many others, through want of experience, were imposed on, and signed, without consideration, an offensive document, which led to the suspension of one hundred and fifty out of two hundred students, because they did not on the spot withdraw their names, when suddenly and in a very unhappy manner required to do so.<sup>76</sup>

Meade implied that his resistance to Smith's request derived more from the manner of its delivery than the demand itself. Nevertheless, Republican principles of liberty were central to how rebelling students justified their defiance to Princeton authority.

This considerable number of rebellious students did not end their protest upon exiting the chapel. While the rebellious students broke windows and doors, the faculty escaped Nassau Hall. The Princeton militia were mustered to surround the Hall and protect the town in case the riotous mob turned its sights outward. Maclean remarked that 'the young men kept guard themselves on Tuesday and Wednesday evening but the reports to burn the house becoming so alarming it was thought prudent to take possession of it and accordingly a guard of thirty of the inhabitants watched it last night'.<sup>77</sup> After the fire of 1802, the threat of burning Nassau was not taken lightly. On 9<sup>th</sup> April 1807, the trustees met with a representative of the student rebellion (Abel Upshur a sophomore from Virginia)<sup>78</sup> to discuss terms of reconciliation.<sup>79</sup> The trustees concluded that the

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Meade slightly exaggerated the number of students suspended as 150. The trustee's records indicate that approximately 126 students were suspended. William Meade, *Memoir of the life of the Right Rev. William Meade*, 23.

<sup>77</sup> Maclean to Green, 3 April 1807, PUL MS12175.

<sup>78</sup> See Claude Hall, *Abel Parker Upshur: Conservative Virginian, 1790-1844*, (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1964), 12-14.

<sup>79</sup> TM 10 April 1807, 198-9.

faculty's judgment in suspending Cummins, Hyde, and Matteaus 'was not only just but indispensable and is therefore sustained and confirmed by the Board'.<sup>80</sup> It was agreed that those who signed the petition and participated in the rebellion that followed would be allowed to return after serving a suspension only if they admitted guilt and pledged future obedience to the College laws.<sup>81</sup> Of the 126 rebellious young men, eleven refused the offer and were consequently expelled. Later that year Princeton graduated thirty-five seniors with Bachelor of Arts degrees; the student rebellion, however, had cost twenty-two seniors their degrees.<sup>82</sup>

Across the student disruptions between 1800 and 1807, the demand for expanded student liberties was central. The circumstances surrounding these youthful uprisings had mixed consequences for Smith's system of moral education. With the Board's support, Smith purged 'Jacobin' factions from Princeton in 1802 and later stood firm against Jeffersonian-Republican principles in 1807. Yet the Board of Trustees did not fully support Smith's system after 1805 as it previously had. During this period of conflict, Smith responded differently to what he saw as two converging counter-Enlightenment attacks upon his programme of moral education: 'Jacobin' rebellions to further student liberties and a campaign to revive Christian religious principles led by Ashbel Green and like-minded trustees.

Counter-Enlightenment concerns over Smith's religious orthodoxy were heightened during the rise of the Princeton 'Jacobins'. In addressing student misconduct and unrestrained 'passions', Smith emphasised the instinctive duties of the 'moral

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<sup>80</sup> TM 11 April 1807, 200.

<sup>81</sup> The trustees determined that the expulsion of Jacob Hindman, Abel Upshum, James Bates, William Hayward, Robert Chambers, Joseph Cumming, Robert Breckenridge, Nesille Craig, Edmund Pendleton, Lewis Neth, and James John Bowie 'served the essential interests of the institution' (Ibid).

<sup>82</sup> Maclean, *HCNJ*, 80.

faculty'. He suggested that 'its dictates possess an authority that points it out as a power designed to control our appetites and passions, which, without such control, acting with violence according to their several impulses, would produce only disorder and misery'.<sup>83</sup> Thus, careful attention to the exercise of this faculty was of the utmost importance at Princeton, particularly amidst an increase in violent and destructive student disruptions between 1800 and 1807. This conviction heavily influenced the subjects and substance of his sermons at Princeton, particularly during periods of student unrest.<sup>84</sup> Following the 1802 fire, Smith addressed the students on the 'Progress of Vice'. In this sermon, he remarked:

Of the social connexions of youth, none are more dangerous to the virtue of youth than those which are formed with idle and dissolute companions & no temptations are so fatal to their innocence as those which assail them in society. Deceived by that face of innocent nicety which she wears in the eyes of those who have not yet severely suffered by their follies, they give themselves up to indulgences which, for a time, enchant the fancy & intoxicate the heart; & seldom are awakened from their dreams of false joy, to sober reason & reflection, till they are awakened by their shame & misery into which she has plunged them.<sup>85</sup>

Smith's lectures on the rules of duty, the consequences of immoral companions (which affected behaviour through the 'imitative faculty') and idleness continued with renewed purpose in responding to Princeton 'Jacobins'. In an 13<sup>th</sup> November 1803 sermon at Princeton entitled 'On the Fear of God,' Smith taught:

The knowledge of our duty as the practise of it is near past; but it is often considered obscure and difficult by the contrary bias of our passions. The elements of the moral law are originally written on the heart of man by the hand of his creator.<sup>86</sup>

By urging the exercise of the 'moral faculty' and its rules of duty, Smith advanced natural religion as the best prevention of immoral 'passions'. Smith's sermons emphasised

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<sup>83</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 319.

<sup>84</sup> In addition to this practical purpose, his sermons were renowned for their eloquence and 'polite' sophistication. See Owen Aldridge, 'An Early American Adaptation of French Pulpit Oratory', *Theory and Interpretation*, 28, (1987): 235-247.

<sup>85</sup> Samuel Stanhope Smith, 'The Progress of Vice', PUL MS8035.

<sup>86</sup> Samuel Stanhope Smith, 'On the Fear of God', 13 November 1803, PUL MS12800.

moderation and commitment to cultivating the mind following Jefferson's 1805 Inaugural Address that stressed concepts of patriotic principles and the need to safeguard the 'equality of rights'.<sup>87</sup> As shown, these principles heavily influenced the student justification for defending liberties that College laws supposedly infringed upon. In a sermon on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1805, entitled 'The Example of Jesus', Smith argued that 'it is by limiting the sphere of our active affections to our country, to our friends, to our immediate connections and dependents, that we can usually contribute our portion most conspicuously towards the general happiness of the human race'.<sup>88</sup> Smith's urgency to restrain radical counter-Enlightenment attachments to religious, political, and philosophical principles was a central object in his sermons at Princeton and his lectures of moral philosophy. His enthusiasm for the science of mind and the intrinsic 'lights' of natural religion received hostility from an influential faction of religious revivalists.

### **Princeton's Counter-Enlightenment: Green's campaign for religious revivalism**

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Smith's ecclesiastical and professorial reputation peaked. The positive transnational reception of Smith's *Sermons* (1799), his 1799 election as moderator of the General Assembly, and his 1799 creation of the science programme at Princeton were reasons why he was regarded as an enlightened divine amongst his contemporaries. For some, these achievements rendered his ideas on moral education beyond reproach; Ashbel Green, however, continued to scrutinise the religious implications of Smith's Princeton Enlightenment. On 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1799, Green was once again alarmed by Smith's dominant use of metaphysics in addressing Princeton's

<sup>87</sup> Although Jefferson's 1801 Inaugural Address advanced the principles that demarcated his presidency and the 1805 Address described his previous policies as president, the latter still incorporated the idea that the public must defend their liberties from government obstruction. Thomas Jefferson's Second Inaugural Address on 4 March 1805, reprinted in *Jefferson: Political Writings*, 532.

<sup>88</sup> Samuel Stanhope Smith, 'The Example of Jesus', 25 September 1805, PUL MS12800.

graduating class and later took ‘comfort by reading Whitefield’s sermon on the originations of Christ’.<sup>89</sup> His solace in Whitefield’s theology illustrates his attachment to religious revivalism whilst opposing Smith’s ‘sweet resolution of a well spent life’ exercising the mind as a primary source of ‘happiness’.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, Smith’s declared objective ‘to edify and please--to give the grace of novelty to old and trite truths—and to add the decent and lawful embellishments of art to the simplicity of the gospel’ in his *Sermons* certainly did not conform to Green’s fundamental religious convictions.<sup>91</sup> From Smith’s mixture of metaphysics and ‘true religion’ at Princeton, Green believed that, under Smith’s direction, the College lacked fundamental Christian religious principles.

Green was not alone in his criticism of Smith’s unorthodox sermons. Maclean noted that numerous newspapers in the Middle Atlantic circulated the story that Smith’s younger brother, John, had supposedly stated, ‘Brother Sam, you don’t preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, but Sam Smith and him dignified’.<sup>92</sup> Maclean claimed that this criticism of Smith’s use of ‘polite’ rhetoric and philosophy did not originate from John Blair Smith, but probably derived from ‘a better judge of strong drink than of sound doctrine’.<sup>93</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, Green informed Smith throughout the early 1790s of his concerns with blurring theology and moral philosophy.<sup>94</sup> Yet Green’s personality and religious convictions would not permit a passive disapproval of Smith’s Princeton Enlightenment. According to William Plumer, ‘Dr. Green has been, since my first knowledge of him, a firm, fearless, and successful opposer of certain new doctrines

<sup>89</sup> Green, Diary, 22 September 1799, PUL C0257 Box one.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Smith, *Sermons*, iii.

<sup>92</sup> Maclean, *HCNJ*, 133.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> See chapter five, 190-192.

and measures which have obtained in the American churches'.<sup>95</sup> Around the turn of the nineteenth century, Green's "crusade" was the removal of Smith's system of moral education from Princeton. With little hope of altering Smith's moral thought and its central role in his theology, Green planted the seed of reviving Princeton's Christian religious principles that would grow into a counter-Enlightenment campaign that specifically opposed the Princeton Enlightenment. In doing so, he entertained the idea of renewing Princeton as a theological seminary. In January 1800, Green introduced this concept of educating 'men for the ministry in an institution by themselves' to fellow revivalists.<sup>96</sup> As an alumnus and trustee, his personal investment in Princeton's success and progress indicates that he probably did not wish to sever those connections. Thus, his attention centered on returning Princeton's commitment to the training of ministers. Green's ideas for reforming Princeton took shape and attracted disciples over the following decade. Meanwhile, this undercurrent of counter-Enlightenment opposition against Smith's programme of moral education became bolder as Smith's control of the student population began to crumble.

The aftermath of the 1802 Nassau Hall fire instigated a concerted effort by Princeton alumni to rally support for repairs. While the majority of the trustees agreed with Smith that unrestrained 'passions' were a central cause of radical 'Jacobin' activities, Green believed the fire was the result of Princeton's irreligion not an isolated group of unruly students.<sup>97</sup> In turn, Green believed the 1802 fire should awaken religious principles to counter the destructive forces of Princeton's impiety. Weeks after the fire, the Board requested that Green draft an address to the public and the General Assembly

<sup>95</sup> William Plumer to Joseph Jones on September 1848, quoted in *Life of Ashbel Green*, 503.

<sup>96</sup> Green to Griffin on 13 January 1800, quoted in Noll, *Princeton and the Republic*, 156.

<sup>97</sup> Maclean, *HCNJ*, 41-2.

regarding Princeton's commitment to diffusing Christian principles. Since Green served as the elected chairman of the Standing Committee of the General Assembly (1802-1812), the Board understandably believed he could convince the Church to support Nassau's repairs.<sup>98</sup> In addition to achieving this task, Green illustrated what he believed Princeton should be, rather than discussing its objectives under Smith's system of moral education. In doing so, Green suggested that Princeton's purpose was 'to make this institution an asylum for pious youth'.<sup>99</sup> This objective of educating 'pious youth' was fundamentally different from Smith's stated purpose of 'forming the intellectual and moral habits of youth, on whom the future welfare of their country depends'.<sup>100</sup> These contrasting opinions of Princeton's purpose were ripe for tension particularly in the contexts of defending against radical 'Jacobins'. In the following years, Green undermined Smith's authority as a means to make space for the revival of Witherspoon's 'republican Christian Enlightenment'.

While the Board of Trustees harnessed Smith's fame and connections across the middle and southern states as a way to secure funds for the repair of Nassau, they requested that Green fulfil the duties of president in his absence.<sup>101</sup> Despite his commitments as a minister in Philadelphia, Green accepted this offer. Shortly before Smith's departure, the Board charged Green, Smith, and Boudinot with the task of reviewing the College laws and suggesting changes that would prevent future student disruptions.<sup>102</sup> This joint committee was intended to submit their recommendations after

<sup>98</sup> Green, *Life of Ashbel Green*, 323.

<sup>99</sup> Ashbel Green, 'Address of the Trustees of the College of New Jersey, to the Inhabitants of the United States', 18 March 1802, quoted in Maclean, *HCNJ*, 37.

<sup>100</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, 232.

<sup>101</sup> TM, 28 September 1802, 86.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

Smith's return so he could offer input as well. Yet Green did not postpone this task. As Princeton's acting president, Green's suggested amendments involved an increase of Christianity and its study to Princeton life. That implied a reform of the curriculum rather than adjusting College rules of conduct. On 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1803, the Board agreed that

the laws of the College requiring that certain religious exercises be performed by the students on the Sabbath, Dr. Green, as President, recommended the study of Paley's 'Evidences of the Christian Religion' as an exercise for the Senior class, Campbell on Miracles for the Junior, and the Catechism, connected with the reading of the Bible, as an exercise of the Sophomore and Freshman classes, each student being allowed to make choice of the Catechism of that denomination to which he belongs.<sup>103</sup>

These new requirements, at the bequest of Green, expanded the role of revealed religion at Princeton. These activities (particularly the senior and junior assignments for the Sabbath) were clearly designed as practical exercises in preparing future ministers. The preparation in fulfilling these new mandates placed a greater stress on the students' already demanding studies. Furthermore, students of the science programme were not excused from this new requirement. Since Green believed irreligion affected the whole of the student body, the consistent study of the Gospels across all ranks of students was deemed necessary.

Upon his return from the Carolinas, Smith discovered Green's amendments to his system of moral education. Yet, rather than oppose the new laws, Smith (who had proven adept at adapting to adverse situations) used these newly imposed laws to serve his moral philosophy. The following academic year Smith taught lectures on the evidences of the Christian religion based on his moral thought rather than drawing from William Paley's *A View of the Evidences of Christianity* (1796), which Green had highly recommended.<sup>104</sup> For example, Smith's initial four lectures largely demonstrated how central themes of his

<sup>103</sup> TM, 30 November 1802, 119.

<sup>104</sup> See Miles Bradbury, 'British Apologetics in Evangelical Garb: Samuel Stanhope Smith's *Lectures on the Evidences of the Christian Religion*', *Journal of the Early Republic*, 5, (1985): 177-195. William Paley, *A View of the Evidences of Christianity*, fifth edition, two vols, (London, 1796).



moral philosophy (such as the ‘moral faculty’ taught in his second lecture) offered evidence of God’s existence and supported the auxiliary study of His revealed ‘truths’.<sup>105</sup> No evidence has surfaced that suggests that Smith was aware of Green’s intentions to undermine his system of moral education at this time. He appeared to approve of Green’s temperament as conducive to governing young men. On Green’s personality, Plumer remarked that he ‘was earnest, but he was fair’.<sup>106</sup> In contrast, Smith was not an effective disciplinarian.

Smith’s continued struggle with tuberculosis since 1773 coupled with the likely increase of students (which would require a strong authoritative presence) persuaded him to recruit Green as vice-president. In a 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1803 letter to Green, Smith wrote that ‘I wish you could consult to transfer yourself to the College as theological professor and vice president... Professor Thompson is so entirely inadequate to any purposes of government and our perpetual changes of tutors render that duty too apprehensive to my declining strength’.<sup>107</sup> In this request, Smith appealed to Green’s known interest in improving Princeton’s seminary training. He certainly attempted to entice Green too by suggesting, ‘I think the theological school by proper exertions might be in a short time considerably increased [and] some important alterations are absolutely necessary which will require time to arrange’.<sup>108</sup> Did this offer imply a significant change of Smith’s system of moral education? Since Princeton’s divinity course was not a requirement of its science degree, an expansion of its programme would not affect the base of Princeton’s

<sup>105</sup> According to Smith, ‘if it was worthy the wisdom and benignity of God to provide for the safety of his offspring it was certainly chiefly to be expected that he would impart to man the knowledge of his Creator, his duties and his immortal hopes that he might not only be the Father but the instructor of his posterity’ (Smith, Lectures on the Evidences of the Christian Religion, 1804 lectures taken by an unknown student, PUA AC052).

<sup>106</sup> Plumer to Jones September 1848, in *Life of Green*, 503.

<sup>107</sup> Smith to Green, 24 March 1803, PUL MS12414.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

'enlightened learning'. Furthermore, Smith's earlier experience as Witherspoon's vice-president, when he assumed many of his College responsibilities (particularly during his final years), probably influenced Smith's request of Green's assistance. Yet the dynamic of Smith's and Green's tense relationship prevented such an arrangement which had previously existed between Witherspoon and Smith. Green did not directly decline Smith's offer, but he did not accept it either. Through inquiries amongst Green's circle Smith was informed that Green thought 'it improper to leave [his] church in its present state'.<sup>109</sup> Green's devotion to his congregation did not prevent his earlier service (just months prior to Smith's offer) as Princeton's temporary president. Furthermore, Green's decision not to accept an opportunity to improve Princeton's seminary training as the professor of theology and vice-president appeared peculiar considering the evidence that he actively promoted its reform. After Smith informed the Board of Green's decision, they elected Henry Kollock as the professor of theology on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1803.<sup>110</sup> This election occurred during a special meeting of the trustees who had gathered the required quorum of thirteen Board members to make this appointment. For religious revivalists on the Board (particularly Green and Boudinot) this appointment identified 'that the Trustees think the study of Divinity, a subject of small Importance'.<sup>111</sup>

As Green advanced his counter-Enlightenment campaign to reform Princeton into a theological seminary, reasons why Green did not accept the professorship and vice-presidency were evident: he opposed Smith's system of moral education. He did not, however, express his objection to Smith's moral philosophy openly.<sup>112</sup> Instead, he

<sup>109</sup> Smith to Green, 26 November 1803, PUL MS2166.

<sup>110</sup> TM, 8 December 1803, 117.

<sup>111</sup> Boudinot to Elisha Boudinot, 27 December 1803, quoted in Noll, *Princeton and the Republic*, 178.

<sup>112</sup> Green wrote Smith of Mr. Morris's complaints against his moral philosophy on 13 May 1804. Green noted that he felt guilty for writing the letter (Green, Diary, 13 May 1804, PUL C0257 Box two).

circulated reasons why other people questioned the substance of Smith's moral thought. Green's activities eventually caught Smith's attention in June 1804. But when Smith questioned Green regarding his part in spreading these rumours, Green defensively claimed that such an accusation was a 'disadvantage of my character'.<sup>113</sup> Smith's suspicions of Green would later prove well placed.

Before Smith learned of these complaints, Green received notice that a 'respectable clergyman in Virginia' (William Hill) was led to believe that Smith's lectures of moral philosophy endorsed polygamy and the practise of having concubines.<sup>114</sup> In response, Green contacted one of Smith's tutors (John Bradford) for assistance. He wrote, 'if the Dr and I were on as good terms as we once were, I would write to him at once on the subject, but from [the] whole have been informed, he would consider my doing this as an insidious attempt to injure him'.<sup>115</sup> Green requested from Bradford 'in perfect confidence' a copy of Smith's lecture notes so he could determine if there was any merit in this complaint.<sup>116</sup> After securing Smith's lecture notes from Bradford, Green discovered that Smith did in fact discuss the practise of polygamy.<sup>117</sup> In his nineteenth lecture of the course, Smith examined the instinctive duties of marriage and its role in society.<sup>118</sup> For Smith, the obligations of marriage between man and wife were communicated by the 'moral faculty'. Yet his tolerance for different cultural and

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 14 June 1804.

<sup>114</sup> Hill to Green, 20 January 1804, PUL C0257.

<sup>115</sup> Green to John Bradford, January 1804, PUL MS2740.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Bradford to Green, 4 February 1804, PUL MS2434. See Douglas Sloan, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal*, 164-166.

<sup>118</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, vol. two, 117-141.

religious beliefs led him to question if polygamy was naturally immoral, or it was considered immoral only because of western cultural and religious norms. Smith taught:

Marriage, according to the precepts of religion and the civil institutions of the Christian world, can take place only between one man, and one woman. But in consequence of the laws of Israel upon this subject, and the customs of patriarchal antiquity, it has become a question among Christian moralists, whether polygamy be contrary to the prescription of the law of nature, or only to the positive institutions of religion and the state?<sup>119</sup>

He considered that the accepted practises of polygamy within Turkey, Persia, and Arabia did not lead citizens of those nations toward promiscuous or immoral conduct. For instance, Smith distinguished between polygamy and the taking of mistresses or having an extra-marital affair, which were considered the result of unrestrained 'passions'. For these reasons, Smith concluded that 'I cannot suppose that there is natural immorality attached to the law of Polygamy...and its immorality since the coming of Christ, the great moral legislator of the universe, rests chiefly upon his positive institution, supported by the law of the land'.<sup>120</sup> While Smith believed polygamy was not wrong on the basis of natural law, he let it be known that 'I have no hesitation to admit as a philosopher, and a Christian, that the law of one wife, as prescribed by our blessed Saviour, is most favourable to the interests of human nature, and of civil society'.<sup>121</sup> Despite Smith's overt agreement with God's revealed law, Green did not share his cultural and religious tolerance.<sup>122</sup> Green argued that 'there can never be nothing improper in anyone being acquainted with what has been taught to youth as a part of public education'.<sup>123</sup> Green's

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 119-120.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>122</sup> Ruth Bloch has shown that 'Evangelical writings contained many instructions about family religion and many condemnations about extramarital sex, but they dwelt on marital sexuality and romantic love' (Ruth Bloch, 'Changing Conceptions of Sexuality and Romance in Eighteenth-Century America', *WMQ*, 60: 1, (January 2003): 29).

<sup>123</sup> Green to John Bradford, 1 July 1804, PUL MS2740.

demands that the trustees censor Smith's future lectures did not persuade the Board to take any form of action. The death or retirement of key trustees who supported Smith's system of moral education created an opportunity for change with their replacements.

After Green revealed his thoughts of Smith to the Board, Green indicated that their cordial relationship was not sincere.<sup>124</sup> Green's opinion that Smith's system of moral education perverted Witherspoon's 'republican Christian Enlightenment' was, from this point forward, known. Green later claimed that his eldest son (Robert), who graduated from Princeton in 1805, 'had at one time been on the brink of infidelity' in the years following his graduation. He suggested that Robert's careful reading of the Gospels years after leaving Princeton corrected his character. This implied Green's belief that Robert's moral and religious struggle stemmed from his time at Princeton. After Green's 1804 investigation of Smith's moral philosophy, he sent his younger sons (Jacob and James) to the University of Pennsylvania and Dickinson College respectively.<sup>125</sup> This decision reflected his profound opposition to Smith's system of moral education.

Meanwhile, the unprecedented number of seniors (fifty-three young men) who graduated on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1806 testified to the success of Smith's programme.<sup>126</sup> Princeton's seminary training under the guidance of Henry Kollock, however, did not contribute any students to this graduation. Kollock struggled with expanding the seminary and tendered his resignation after enduring four years of sparsely populated classrooms whilst observing Smith and Maclean's classes overflow from their

<sup>124</sup> Noll, *Princeton and the Republic*, 181.

<sup>125</sup> Green, *Life of Ashbel Green*, 353.

<sup>126</sup> TM, 23 September 1806, 179.

popularity. With only four theology students in 1804, Kollock's dissatisfaction was understandable.<sup>127</sup> In resigning, Kollock wrote:

I flattered myself when I came to Princeton that I might by instructing students of Divinity be of as much service to the Church of Christ as by officiating in any particular congregation—the number of my students however has been and probably will continue to be so small as to render my labours of little consequence.<sup>128</sup>

Kollock's resignation occurred at the beginning of an academic year that witnessed the largest student population (over 200) at Princeton. Afterwards, the Board delegated Kollock's previous responsibilities to Smith.<sup>129</sup> But the loss of another professor to govern this large student body proved most devastating. Kollock's belief that his efforts to improve Princeton's seminary had 'little consequence' subjected Smith's system of moral education to further scrutiny and disapproval from orthodox evangelicals. The 1807 student rebellion solidified these concerns that Smith did not properly address irreligion as president.

The Board of Trustees who judged Smith's programme in the aftermath of the 1807 'Great Rebellion' did not support the interests of the Princeton Enlightenment as it had in earlier years. As previously mentioned the Board traditionally consisted of an equal mixture of laymen and divines, however, after the death or resignation of influential trustees from 1805 through 1807, newly appointed trustees joined Green's enthusiasm for religious revivalism.<sup>130</sup> According to Mark Noll, these revivalists dominated the Board

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<sup>127</sup> TM, 1804, 128.

<sup>128</sup> TM, 24 September 1806, 184.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>130</sup> Trustees John Bayard, Rev. William Boyd, and Rev. Alexander MacWhorter died in 1807. John Rodgers, Jonathan Smith, and Azel Roe resigned from the Board due to old age. The new trustees included Samuel Bayard, Andrew Kirkpatrick, Samuel Miller, Robert Finley, James Richards, George Spafford Woodhull (Noll, *Princeton and the Republic*, 240-241). For a more detailed discussion of these newly elected trustees see Mark Noll, 'The Princeton Trustees of 1807: New Men and New Directions', *Princeton University Library Chronicles*, 41, (1980): 208-230.

and gradually removed Smith's influence in determining College affairs.<sup>131</sup> The trustees' decision to discontinue the language courses (particularly French) in the spring of 1808 exemplified their reduction of Smith's system of moral education.<sup>132</sup> The termination of Thompson and resignation of Kollock forced Smith and Maclean to govern the students as the only remaining professors. Instead of expanding the faculty and course offerings as they had in 1803, the trustees reasoned that the severe reduction of the student population (ninety-two students) after the 1807 'Great Rebellion', required fewer professors to teach in the College. This reduction of courses diminished Princeton's reputation. Rush, for example, claimed in 1808 that 'Princeton has lately lost popularity among us'.<sup>133</sup> At this time, Smith undoubtedly suspected that Green's counter-Enlightenment campaign would not be satisfied with the elimination of the language course alone.

Green's considerable influence in the American Presbyterian Church and then as a leader of a group within the Board of Trustees permitted him to advance his design of establishing a theological seminary. After Kollock resigned and concerns of Smith as a minister, Princeton forfeited its claim that it offered seminary training. Meanwhile, the 1808 General Assembly furthered Green's interests by targeting Smith's system of moral education as an impediment to founding a theological seminary at Princeton. As the previous moderator in 1807, Rev. Archibald Alexander addressed the 1808 General Assembly on the perceived problems of preparing future ministers. Alexander remarked:

Our seminaries of learning, although increasing in literature and numbers, furnish us with few preachers. The great extension of the physical sciences, and the taste and fashion of the age, have given such a shape and direction to the academical course, that I confess, it appears to me to be little adapted to introduce a youth to the study of the sacred Scriptures.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 240-242.

<sup>132</sup> Thompson to Green, 16 September 1807, PUL MS2167.

<sup>133</sup> Rush to John Montgomery on 5 July 1808, quoted in *Letters of Rush*, edited by Butterfield, vol. two, (PUP, 1951), 970.

<sup>134</sup> Alexander, *Life*, 314-315.

Alexander targeted Princeton in this plea for revived piety and theological training in American higher education. As the first and only American college at that time to offer a degree programme in the natural sciences, Smith's system of moral education received heightened attention after Alexander's speech. In league with Alexander's proposed plan, Green claimed that 'encouraged by this, I used all my influence in favour of the measure'.<sup>135</sup> In 1809, he delivered on this promise by persuading the Board of Trustees to discontinue Princeton's science programme. On 27<sup>th</sup> September 1809, the Board resolved:

That the resolution passed in September, 1799, admitting students to read in the College on such subjects of science as they or their parents may select, and receive certificates of their proficiency in such sciences which shall be publically delivered to them on the day of Commencement, be repealed.<sup>136</sup>

As discussed in chapter four, Smith invested considerable care in creating this programme in 1799 and in the following years it had attracted numerous students who desired an enlightened and modern education.<sup>137</sup> The discontinuation of the science programme signified the end of a central facet of Smith's system of moral education. This resolution removed any doubt that the Board wanted to overturn Smith's reforms of the curriculum. During an 1811 special meeting of the trustees, Smith attempted to rekindle support for his system with an appointment of a professor of mathematics and astronomy.<sup>138</sup> Although Green had once taught mathematics at Princeton, the Board refused Smith's request.

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<sup>135</sup> Green, *Life of Green*, 333.

<sup>136</sup> TM, 27 September 1809, 375.

<sup>137</sup> See chapter four, 158-159.

<sup>138</sup> TM, 19 December 1811, 302.



Despite Smith's objections, the Board authorised a committee (Green, Miller, Clark, Woodhull, and Richards) to meet with the General Assembly to discuss plans of founding Princeton Theological Seminary.<sup>139</sup> Green had previously designed these plans as the chairman of a General Assembly committee for a new seminary in 1810. At this time, Green began writing his lectures on a shorter catechism (which he completed in 1811).<sup>140</sup> These lectures would certainly have a place in a newly established theological seminary. Green's success in winning the Board's approval to establish a new theological seminary at Princeton must have devastated Smith who had staunchly resisted these plans throughout his presidency. Three days after the Board approved the establishment of Princeton's Theological Seminary on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1812, Smith resigned from Princeton.<sup>141</sup> Green remarked that 'Dr Smith offered to resign if we would comply with certain terms which we did not accept'.<sup>142</sup> Smith was the first Princeton president to resign and not die whilst in office. The trustee's refusal to accept Smith's departing requests demonstrated how strained their relationship had become. Later that year, Smith wrote:

Some of my opinions are too philosophical for several of my brethren who are so deadly orthodox, that they cannot find words in the English language to express their zeal and jealous upon the subject and therefore oblige their candidates to swear *ex animo* to all their doctrines.<sup>143</sup>

Smith's grim depiction of the ministers (which undoubtedly included Green) who opposed his moral thought touched upon a shift in the reception of Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy from American evangelicals. In response to Princeton's

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<sup>139</sup> TM, 12 April 1812, 324.

<sup>140</sup> Green, *Life of Green*, 317.

<sup>141</sup> Green, Diary, 15 April 1812, PUL C0257 Box two.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Smith to Rush, 27 September 1812, PUL C0028.

reformed purpose, Maclean submitted his resignation on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1812 and accepted a professorship at the College of William and Mary.<sup>144</sup>

The removal of Smith and his system of moral education did not complete Green's plans for Princeton. Samuel Miller, a trustee who shared Green's vision of Princeton, petitioned the other trustees to elect Green as President, not vice-president as had been initially suggested. In the same year, Green returned the favour by nominating Samuel Miller as Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Princeton Theological Seminary, which Archibald Alexander governed as president after its 1812 establishment.<sup>145</sup> During the founding of Princeton Theological Seminary, Green advanced the Seminary's interests on Princeton's Board with 'a severity to which I am unaccustomed, which I am surprised did not keep them from giving me a *unanimous* vote to the president of the college'.<sup>146</sup> Under Green's guidance as president, Princeton and Princeton Theological Seminary shared largely the same purpose of diffusing Christian religious principles and preparing young men for the ministry.

The election of Green, Alexander, and Miller to influential offices within Princeton and its infant seminary demonstrated their triumph over Smith's system of moral education. Smith noted years after his resignation that 'Dr. Green has entirely disused my lectures on the Evidences of Religion and on Moral Philosophy, on the plea that they are not exactly conformed to his notions on the subject of divine grace'.<sup>147</sup> The fact that Green did not use Smith's moral philosophy lectures on the grounds of conflicting views of the powers of God and humankind provides further evidence of his

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<sup>144</sup> TM, 13 August 1812, 335.

<sup>145</sup> Green, *Life of Green*, 348.

<sup>146</sup> Green to Archibald Alexander, 30 September 1812, PUL C0257.

<sup>147</sup> Quoted in Ezra Gillett, *The History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, vol. two, (Philadelphia, 1864), n223.

objection to Smith's philosophical system. Not surprisingly, Green used Witherspoon's lectures on moral philosophy (which he edited) as his course textbook.<sup>148</sup> He also remained committed to promoting Christian religious principles by making his lectures on a shorter catechism required reading at Princeton.<sup>149</sup> Miller later remarked that 'we honour him (Green) as the first head of a college in the United States who introduced the study of the Bible as a regular part of the collegiate course'.<sup>150</sup> The shift from Smith's version of Enlightenment toward Green's revival of Witherspoon's 'republican Christian Enlightenment' with an emphasis on evangelicalism exemplified Princeton's renewed religious purpose. But where Smith enhanced the existing elements of Enlightenment, Green guided the College toward a more fundamentalist interpretation of evangelical principles and aggressive methods of its adoption than Witherspoon had previously attempted. For example, he established Princeton's Bible Society; Bible study became mandatory as an end of year field of examination; he sent parents reports of student conduct (an early version of the report card); and he required juniors and seniors to study Greek and Latin in preparation for further divinity studies.<sup>151</sup> Green's administration, therefore, did not resemble Smith's earlier enthusiasm for modernity, moderation, metaphysics, and scientific innovation. Novak suggests that 'throughout his administration he policed the campus with a pettiness bordering on the obsessive [and] all of Green's efforts since taking office had been directed toward an awakening'.<sup>152</sup> Green's religious revival of Princeton demarcated a new era of learning in the early republic with similar religious sentiments shown at Yale, Harvard, Brown, Middlebury, and

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<sup>148</sup> Maclean, *HCNJ*, 134.

<sup>149</sup> Green, *Life of Green*, 542.

<sup>150</sup> Miller on June 1847, quoted in *Life of Ashbel Green*, 611.

<sup>151</sup> Novak, *Rights of Youth*, 157.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 157, 160.

Williams.<sup>153</sup> This emerging age of religious revivalism arrived at the cost of Enlightenment.

### **Conclusion**

Samuel Stanhope Smith's version of Enlightenment at Princeton preserved a few years of relative peace before it was ended by a counter-Enlightenment faction of clergymen. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, youthful revolts appeared on college campuses across the republic. At Princeton, Smith believed a small faction of so-called 'Jacobins' led these disturbances. While Princeton 'Jacobins' did not consider themselves to be part of a counter-Enlightenment movement, Smith interpreted their radical policies as opposing the central 'Moderate' values of the Princeton Enlightenment. Furthermore, he believed 'Jacobin' inattention to their studies was correlated with their advancement of 'false' philosophy and radical politics. Of the central philosophical themes that he believed prevented 'immoral passions', Smith's treatment of the 'moral faculty' exercised instinctive notions of 'right and wrong'. From this moral principle, he advocated religious and cultural tolerance whilst promoting civil order. In doing so, he taught that students should not rebel against 'just' systems of government but rather appeal to reasonable arguments within its tribunals when liberties were threatened. Furthermore, Smith taught that the instinctive rules of duty obliged student deference to Princeton's governing laws and his system of moral education. As a Federalist, Smith believed Jeffersonian-Republicans endorsed 'Jacobin' values of civil disobedience. Of these beliefs, concepts of patriotic resistance against powers that obstructed liberty influenced the student justification for the 1807 'Great Rebellion'. In response to these episodes of student unrest, Smith advanced his system of moral

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 162.

education as the best defence against immoral ‘passions’, radical politics and extreme religious beliefs.

Meanwhile, religious revivalists interpreted Princeton’s student rebellions as a result of irreligion. A prominent evangelical and Princeton trustee, Ashbel Green led a counter-Enlightenment campaign to remove what he saw as the cause of student impiety: Smith’s system of moral education. Despite Smith’s opposition, Green gradually removed the elements of Smith’s programme with the assistance of newly appointed trustees. Green’s counter-Enlightenment campaign resulted in Smith’s resignation and a new purpose for a Princeton education. In doing so, Green appealed to Witherspoon’s earlier ‘republican Christian Enlightenment’ in creating a revival of Christian religious principles at Princeton. Princeton’s reformed purpose exemplified the rise of religious revivalism across the nation. As evidenced by the later use of Scottish moral philosophy and Scottish Enlightenment values at Princeton (particularly during James McCosh’s administration between 1868 and 1888), Green’s religious awakening of Princeton did not endure beyond the first half of nineteenth century. As the epilogue will show, McCosh’s administration did not attempt to recreate the Scottish Enlightenment nor did he appeal to Smith’s vision of Enlightenment. Smith’s programme of moral education was the last systematic effort to achieve a version of the Scottish Enlightenment at Princeton.

## Conclusion

### **Reflections on the Decline of the Scottish Enlightenment in the Atlantic World**

This thesis has examined the different ways in which Dugald Stewart and Samuel Stanhope Smith used and adapted Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy and their conflict with counter-Enlightenment movements at Edinburgh University and the College of New Jersey respectively, between 1790 and 1812. These celebrated moralists drew heavily from Thomas Reid's philosophy in creating unique systems of moral education. In doing so, Smith and Stewart shared the task of preparing enlightened and virtuous young men for public life at a time when the teaching of metaphysics and natural religion was the subject of controversy on both sides of the Atlantic. By comparing how Smith and Stewart responded to the different institutional and religious contexts in which they taught, this project has shed new light on how these prominent intellectual disciples of Scottish philosophy resisted the decline of the Scottish Enlightenment in its transatlantic contexts.

This project has not offered a comprehensive analysis of Smith's and Stewart's moral philosophy or their intellectual biographies. While the thesis incorporates aspects of these separate pursuits (as it consists of topical chapters that follow a chronological period of Smith's and Stewart's academic careers), each of them would require a single dedicated work. With the slight exceptions of Gordon MacIntyre's biography of Stewart and Mark Noll's thorough discussion of Smith in *Princeton and the Republic*, these projects remain largely unwritten. Instead, this project consists of two connected narratives that reveal the reasons why Smith and Stewart created their systems of moral education, their unique adaptations of Reid's concept of the 'moral faculty', and the opposition that their systems received from counter-Enlightenment campaigns led by religious factions. Comparative case studies of this kind are particularly valuable for their

attention to national contexts whilst revealing how particular ideas and cultural threads existed in transnational contexts. This project, therefore, examines unexplored areas of two prominent pedagogues of moral philosophy within their own contexts, which, in turn, provides examples of the tensions between late eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy and counter-Enlightenment policies in the Atlantic World.

In the decades that followed the French Revolution, central ‘Moderate’ values and philosophy associated with the Scottish Enlightenment were met with hostility from political and ecclesiastical conservative interests. As Richard Sher has shown, the ‘Moderate’ beliefs of religious tolerance, participation in ‘polite’ culture, and promotion of Enlightenment science did not encompass all of the Moderate literati’s values. But these select ideological beliefs had a significant place in Stewart’s and Smith’s systems of moral education. Of the original concepts born from this culture, Thomas Reid’s so-called Common Sense philosophy (later known as Scottish philosophy) flourished as a sophisticated way to combat modern philosophical scepticism (the ‘Ideal Theory’) whilst at the same time advancing metaphysics as a legitimate science that supported the existence of God. As shown, Reid’s philosophical system left his intellectual disciples space for creativity. This creativity existed in the conclusions drawn from Reid’s ‘principles of common sense’ when adapted to different situations and the concerns of other times. I have shown that national cultures and institutional contexts played a significant role in the use and adaptation of Scottish philosophy. Meanwhile, the transatlantic reaction to French revolutionary principles demarcated the transition of a new age where different ideologies struggled for dominance at Princeton and Edinburgh. The striking similarities between Stewart and Smith’s shared enthusiasm for Reid’s philosophy and ‘Moderate’ values whilst defending them against different versions of

counter-Enlightenment policies shows the intellectual, religious, and ideological struggles during the final decades of the Scottish Enlightenment in the Atlantic World.

In the last decade of eighteenth-century Scotland, political and religious conservatives saw the circulation of French revolutionary principles (particularly ideas promoting political radicalism and atheism) as a threat to the established civil and moral order. Consequently, the teaching of metaphysics to impressionable young men (which an increasing number of clergymen and politicians interpreted as a gateway to radicalism) was targeted for censorship. In response to counter-Enlightenment reactions, such as the 1792-1802 Scottish Seditious Trials, Dugald Stewart combated the adoption of philosophical scepticism and radicalism (both religious and political) by creating a programme of moral education at the University of Edinburgh. His programme modernised Reid's so-called Common Sense philosophy for a new generation. As a testimonial to the success of his system, Stewart's students, including Thomas Brown, Henry Brougham, Francis Horner and Henry Cockburn, became prominent figures in the Scottish Whig party and applied his thought in the *Edinburgh Review*. This raft of supporters celebrated Stewart's eloquence in combining the exercise of the 'intellectual, active and moral powers of the mind' with the practical interests of the secular world. For example, his treatment of the 'auxiliary principles of the moral faculty' taught methods of developing virtuous habits and sociability whilst improving manners that were valued in Scottish 'polite' culture. Beyond his attention to modernity, this original part of Stewart's programme contributed to strengthening the branches of duty and encouraged the foundations for universal benevolence. Stewart, therefore, believed that the primacy of the mind and the various practical ways in which it could be perfected was of paramount importance for advancing an enlightened and benevolent state of society.



Across the Atlantic, Samuel Stanhope Smith also communicated the ideas and values of the Scottish Enlightenment through a programme of moral education. Following John Witherspoon as president of the College of New Jersey, Smith did not build directly upon Witherspoon's 'republican Christian Enlightenment' as Mark Noll suggests. Beyond his dramatic reforms of the curriculum that expanded secular courses, Smith taught controversial metaphysical themes that were untouched or only marginally discussed by his predecessor. In creating a new version of Enlightenment at Princeton that he hoped would rival Edinburgh's age of improvement, Smith concentrated on preparing future statesmen for service in public office. In achieving this ambition, Smith's lectures of moral philosophy gave purpose to the Princeton Enlightenment by embedding virtuous habits and 'Moderate' values in graduates before they entered public life. For example, Smith's emphasis on cultural and religious tolerance in treating the 'moral faculty' were hallmarks of the Princeton Enlightenment that informed the thought of future statesmen and public intellectuals. It was hoped that Princeton graduates would later diffuse these enlightened views as leaders of a wider American Enlightenment. As an ordained minister, Smith's promotion of metaphysics as the primary source of moral conduct was peculiar among his Evangelical contemporaries. Yet Smith had a talent for thriving during periods of adversity. This talent was reflected in his conviction that conflict or periods of hardship ripened the possibility for Enlightenment. Contrary to Witherspoon's administration, Smith's version of Enlightenment centered upon the perfection of the mind and, because of this, was the target of fierce criticism from fundamentalist ministers.

The ways in which Smith and Stewart addressed social, religious, philosophical, and political concerns on either side of the Atlantic was not limited to their treatment of the 'moral faculty' or confined to their shared enthusiasm for Reid's philosophical

system. As philosophers who drew from a wide range of earlier theorists as well as their contemporaries throughout the Republic of Letters, it would be wrong to suggest that Reid's philosophy influenced every philosophical theme and all of the topics they taught. Furthermore, their rich treatment of natural religion, political economy, natural law, and their participation in literary culture deserve further attention.<sup>1</sup> On the topic of moral education, however, the 'moral faculty' provides the best example of the creativity and practicality shown in Smith's and Stewart's applied ethics.

In the decades that followed the French Revolution, widespread fears on the fragility of civil society and the most effectual means of its protection affected the diffusion of ideas across the Atlantic World. While the products of the Scottish Enlightenment (particularly 'Moderate' values and Reid's philosophy) received earlier application at institutions of higher education on either side of the Atlantic, its endurance incurred hostility from emerging counter-Enlightenment policies. Yet questions remain how far these counter-Enlightenment policies to safeguard impressionable youth and disseminate Christian principles extended.

This thesis has shown that the new "Moderate" clergymen of Edinburgh led by George Hill and the religious revivalists on Princeton's Board of Trustees led by Ashbel Green had well defined ideas on the censorship of higher education. At Edinburgh, the 1805 John Leslie case embodied on-going political, ecclesiastical, and ideological tensions between the sons of the Scottish Enlightenment and clergymen associated with the interests of Henry Dundas. In league with this struggle for influence, the Leslie affair pitted both interest groups in a battle over the future of secularism in the Faculty of Arts at Edinburgh University. Stewart's system of moral education (which strongly advocated

<sup>1</sup> See Charles Bradford Bow, 'In Pursuit of "Moral Beauty" and Intellectual Pleasures: Dugald Stewart and Edinburgh's literary culture, 1772-1810', in *The Scottish Enlightenment and Literary Culture*, edited by Kenneth Simpson, Ralph Mclean, and Ronnie Young, (Tuckwell Press in association with the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Studies Society, forthcoming in 2014).

the study of metaphysics and secularism in the arts) was pivotal in this debate. Stewart rallied his former students in a campaign to defend the ideals of his system in British print culture and in the 1805 General Assembly. From these concerted efforts, Leslie was acquitted and Stewart's system as well as Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy thrived in the decade that followed. But did this victory safeguard the continuation of Stewart's system after his retirement? After retiring as the active professor of moral philosophy in 1810, Stewart endorsed the election of Thomas Brown; Brown, however, did not strictly follow Stewart's moral philosophy despite their joint holding of the professorship. Brown's promising career at Edinburgh was cut short by his untimely death in 1820 at the age of forty-two.<sup>2</sup> Despite the competition of a more qualified candidate in William Hamilton, John Wilson (also known by the pseudonym 'Christopher North' as a frequent contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*) secured the election of Stewart's former chair through the support of powerful Tory allies including Walter Scott. During this politically controversial election, Wilson's wife, Jane Penny, wrote:

The Whigs hitherto have had everything their own way; and the late Professor was one, as well as the well known Dugald Stewart, who resigned the situation from bad health, and who has it in his power to resume lecturing if he chooses, and which I fear he will do from party spirit, if he thinks there is any chance of Mr. Wilson's success... The report that Dugald Stewart meant to resume his lectures, came from such a good authority that Mr. Wilson set off immediately to Peebles to recover his fatigue. [T]he very next day Dugald Stewart sent in his resignation.<sup>3</sup>

Following Stewart's resignation, Wilson's passion for Romantic literature ushered in the age of Romanticism in the teaching of moral philosophy at Edinburgh University between 1820 and 1851 and, consequently, sealed the fate of Stewart's system.<sup>4</sup>

Nineteenth-century Romanticism, therefore, was connected with the earlier counter-

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<sup>2</sup> See Gordon Graham, *Scottish philosophy: Selected readings, 1690-1960*, (Imprint Academic, 2004), 165-186.

<sup>3</sup> Jane Penny Wilson to her sister, 29 April 1820 and July 1820, in Mary Wilson Gordon, 'Christopher North': *A Memoir of John Wilson*, (Edinburgh, 1862), 306-307.

<sup>4</sup> See Wilson-Gordon, 'Christopher North', 296-335.

Enlightenment policies that opposed the science of the mind as well as a myriad of other factors. Following the 1828 death of Stewart, Thomas Carlyle claimed that ‘Dugald Stewart is dead, and British Philosophy with him’.<sup>5</sup> The later writings of nineteenth-century Scottish moralists including Carlyle, William Hamilton, James Ferrier, and John Stuart Mill indicate that Scottish philosophy did not completely fade into obscurity.<sup>6</sup> But no one rivalled the heights of Stewart’s earlier system of moral education and its final service in attempting to sustain the Scottish Enlightenment.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Smith believed two separate counter-Enlightenment factions converged in opposition to his system of moral education and the Enlightenment that it created. Despite harbouring different objectives, unruly students (known by Federalists and Smith as ‘Jacobins’) and religious revivalists led by Ashbel Green wrought havoc on the Princeton Enlightenment. The radical nature of the ‘Jacobin’ attempts to secure further student liberties by protesting, vandalising, and later rebelling against Princeton’s authority demonstrated a dismissal of Smith’s so-called rules of duty and his ‘Moderate’ beliefs. Meanwhile, Smith’s mingling of metaphysics and ‘true religion’ received hostility from fundamentalist Evangelicals. Green led a campaign within Princeton’s Board of Trustees to remove Smith’s system and revive Princeton’s Christian principles. The appointment of trustees who joined Green’s campaign between 1805 and 1807 shifted the Board’s interests that led to the slow death of Smith’s system of moral education and Enlightenment at Princeton. At the time of Smith’s 1812 retirement, the Princeton Enlightenment was entirely dismantled and in its place Green rekindled a more rigid Evangelical interpretation of Witherspoon’s

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Carlyle to John Carlyle, 25 August 1828, in *Carlyle Letters*, vol. 4, 396-401.

<sup>6</sup> See Ralph Jessop, ‘Resisting the Enlightenment’s Instrumentalist Legacy: James, Hamilton, and Carlyle on the Mechanization of the Human Condition’, *History of European Ideas*, (forthcoming in 2013).

'republican Christian Enlightenment'. Green's use of Witherspoon's lectures on moral philosophy, which he edited, suggests Scottish moral philosophy survived this upheaval. But Witherspoon's sparse treatment of metaphysics did not resemble the sophistication of Smith's later lectures. In light of Green's opposition to the science of the mind and a radical commitment to religious revivalism, he eliminated the role of metaphysics in teaching Witherspoon's lectures on moral philosophy. Yet Green never claimed to be a philosopher nor did he claim to foster Enlightenment. His reforms of the curriculum that renewed Princeton's earlier religious purpose of preparing young men for the ministry reflected his unwavering attachment to Evangelicalism and its promotion. The subsequent administrations of James Carnahan (1823-1854) and John Maclean Jr. (1854-1868) did not follow in Green's footsteps, and they also did not attempt to recreate the distant memory of Smith's system of moral education. On the other hand, James McCosh's later administration between 1868 and 1888 reintroduced a sophisticated teaching of Scottish philosophy. Did McCosh's use of Scottish philosophy and his ambition for Princeton resemble Smith's earlier Princeton Enlightenment? Moreover, could McCosh be seen as a representative of the bygone Scottish Enlightenment? These questions and more will be addressed in the epilogue.

## Epilogue

### **Bridging Tradition and Modernity: James McCosh at Princeton, 1868-1888**

The primacy of Scottish philosophy and Scottish ‘Moderate’ values at Edinburgh University and the College of New Jersey ended after Dugald Stewart and Samuel Stanhope Smith resigned. While Stewart and Smith’s successors did not rival their systems toward perfecting the mind, their enlightened objectives for moral education were not entirely lost amongst future pedagogues. In the aftermath of the American Civil War, Princeton’s Board of Trustees believed the centennial anniversary of John Witherspoon’s 1768 appointment offered an opportunity to rekindle his earlier success. They became convinced that James McCosh, professor of Logic and Metaphysics at Queen’s College in Belfast (which later became Queen’s University), would accomplish this ambition. Like Witherspoon, McCosh defended Evangelicalism within the Church of Scotland (and later as a minister of the Free Church of Scotland) and he drew heavily on Scottish philosophy as professor in Belfast. These activities as well as four philosophical and religious publications (with British and American editions) secured McCosh’s election as the eleventh president of the College of New Jersey.<sup>1</sup> David Hoeveler suggests that McCosh was ‘the last major voice of the Scottish Enlightenment’.<sup>2</sup> McCosh did attempt to harmonise his evangelical convictions with an enthusiasm for Scottish philosophy, but did his administration from 1868 through 1888 revive a version of the Scottish Enlightenment at Princeton? In many ways, McCosh’s restructuring of Princeton’s curriculum departed from the focus of Smith’s and Stewart’s earlier systems

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<sup>1</sup> James McCosh, *Method of Divine Government, Physical and Moral*, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1850); Idem, *The Typical Forms and Special Ends in Creation*, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1855); Idem, *Intuitions of the Mind Inductively Investigated*, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1860); and Idem, *An Examination of Mr J.S. Mill’s Philosophy; being a defence of fundamental truth*, (London and New York, 1866).

<sup>2</sup> J. David Hoeveler, *James McCosh and the Scottish Intellectual Tradition: From Glasgow to Princeton*, (PUP, 1981), ix.

of moral education, particularly the diffusion of ‘Moderate’ values and the exercise of the mind as the foundation for all branches of knowledge. This epilogue does not attempt a comprehensive analysis of McCosh’s ecclesiastical career, his moral philosophy, his ideas on education, or his connections to the earlier Scottish Enlightenment. Instead, it offers suggestive remarks on McCosh’s restructuring of Princeton’s curriculum as a future area of research.<sup>3</sup>

### **‘A New Departure in College Education’: McCosh’s administration of Princeton**

When Princeton’s Board of Trustees offered McCosh the presidency of the College of New Jersey in May 1868 he was already a well established moral philosopher and Evangelical minister.<sup>4</sup> His international reputation as an Evangelical philosopher led

<sup>3</sup> For further reading on McCosh’s administration of Princeton in relation to Witherspoon’s legacy see Charles Bradford Bow, ‘Reforming Witherspoon’s Legacy at Princeton: John Witherspoon, Samuel Stanhope Smith and James McCosh on didactic Enlightenment, 1768-1888’, *History of European Ideas*, (forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup> Born on 1 April 1811 at Carskeoch in Ayrshire, Scotland (thirty miles southwest of Glasgow), James McCosh gravitated toward a career in the ministry from his family’s Evangelical convictions and a Parish school education under the direction Quintin Smith. Contrary to Dugald Stewart’s earlier beliefs, McCosh staunchly opposed ‘Moderatism’ throughout his ecclesiastical career in Scotland. During McCosh’s time as a minister at Brechin from 1839 to 1851, so-called ‘non-intrusion’ ministers (dominated by Evangelicals) complained that Parliament’s interference of the Kirk after the passing of the Reform Act of 1832 corrupted the diffusion of religious principles. George Davie has shown that the ‘Reform Bill of 1832 upset the delicate balance required for the efficient operation of the peculiar institutional inheritance of Scottish Democracy’ (George Davie, *The Democratic Intellect: Scotland and her universities in the nineteenth century*, reprinted edition, (EUP, 1999), 287). The eclipse of Scottish institutional independence in the areas of education and religion did not occur without a fierce struggle. While ‘non-intrusion’ ministers shared James Ferrier’s belief that the Reform Act of 1832 disrupted the dynamics of Scottish society, their support of the Veto Act of 1834 (designed by Thomas Chalmers) and push for an independent Church centered on sustaining Evangelical principles within parish churches. The Veto Act fulfilled this stipulation to a degree; this right, however, was removed when the House of Lords declared in 1843 that it was illegal for a parish congregation to veto the appointment of their pastor. Since this decision overruled the earlier Veto Act of 1834, ‘non-intrusion’ ministers believed drastic action must be taken to uphold the best interests of the Church. Consequently, McCosh joined the convocation of four hundred and fifty so-called ‘non-intrusion’ ministers in separating from the established Church of Scotland and founding the Free Church of Scotland (Richard Brown, *Church and State in Modern Britain, 1700-1850*, (London: Routledge, 1991), 285-287). McCosh’s prominent role in this so-called Disruption of 1843 elevated his reputation as a staunch defender of Evangelicalism. In his first large-scale publication, McCosh classified the divisions and subdivisions between so-called ‘Moderates’ who remained and those who left the Church of Scotland and established the Free Church of Scotland during the so-called Disruption of 1843 (James McCosh, *The Wheat and the Chaff Gathered into Bundles; A Statistical Contribution Towards The History of the Recent Disruption of the Scottish Ecclesiastical Establishment*, (Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Greenock, 1843)).

Princetonians to believe that he had the potential to recreate Witherspoon's earlier union of reason and religion at Princeton.<sup>5</sup> On behalf of the Princeton alumni, James Pollock stated:

In the Republic of Letters there is no dwarfing selfishness, no partisanship, no sectionalism, no sectarianism. All is cosmopolitan, liberal, universal. In other years Scotland recognized this truth, and gave Witherspoon to America... Again America has asked, and McCosh is ours. We, with the blood of nations in our veins; as a nation, the epitome of the world's nationalities, by the magic of our free institutions will give McCosh and freedom to the world.<sup>6</sup>

Princetonians, therefore, had high expectations of McCosh and what his administration would mean to America and the wider world. To what extent did McCosh's administration of Princeton fulfill these expectations?

Before crossing the Atlantic in October 1868, James McCosh contemplated the question: 'what should I make of Princeton College'.<sup>7</sup> With reverence to the Evangelical legacies of Jonathan Edwards and John Witherspoon, he later claimed that 'my aim has been to advance with the times and to do a work in my day such as they did in theirs'.<sup>8</sup> Yet the circumstances at Princeton during McCosh's administration were considerably different than earlier times. While the devastation of the recent Civil War (1861-1865) was still felt by Princetonians, a strong desire for intellectual improvement surrounded McCosh's inauguration. This ambition for a new era of 'enlightened learning' was inextricably linked to Witherspoon's legacy. William Alexander remarked:

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<sup>5</sup> See William Patton, *James McCosh: The making of a Reputation. A study of the life and work of Rev. Dr. James McCosh in Ireland, from his appointment as a Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in Queen's College Belfast 1851, to his appointment as President of Princeton College, New Jersey, and Professor of Philosophy, in 1868*, (Belfast: Belfast University Press, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> James Pollock, 'Address on Behalf of the Alumni', in *Inauguration of James McCosh, D.D., LL.D., as President of the College of New Jersey, Princeton*, (New York: Scribner, 1868), 28-29.

<sup>7</sup> James McCosh, *Twenty Years of Princeton College: Being Farewell Address*, (New York: Scribner, 1888), 6.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9.



There have been two remarkable eras in the history of the College. The first was one hundred years ago, in 1768. The second era in the history of this college is the present...the trustees, animated with the same feeling that governed their predecessors one hundred years ago, desirous to extend the fame and enlarge the influence of the College, again cast their eyes across the same Atlantic to summon to the presidency of the College one [whose] reputation is co-extensive with the scientific world.<sup>9</sup>

Signifying the start of this 'new era' the resigning president John Maclean Jr. presented McCosh with the keys and Charter of the College. During this gesture, Maclean reminded the audience that above supporting the diffusion of knowledge 'it is more especially incumbent upon him [McCosh] to have the oversight of the religious instruction, to guard the morals of the students and their faith in Christ'.<sup>10</sup> These objectives demarcated the ambition of Maclean's administration where the College and Princeton Theological Seminary shared largely the same purpose. According to Maclean, 'it is a fact not to be denied [that] our two institutions [Princeton and Princeton Theological Seminary] have done more for the best interests of the Presbyterian Church than any other two colleges in the land'.<sup>11</sup> While this institutional purpose prevailed in the decades that followed Samuel Stanhope Smith's 1812 resignation, McCosh's administration did not continue this tradition.

In addressing Princeton alumni, trustees, and students for the first time, McCosh reassured them that 'I have no design, avowed or secret, to revolutionize your American colleges or reconstruct them after a European model...I have seen enough of the American colleges [during a 1866 visit] to become convinced that they are not rashly to be meddled with [and] whatever improvements they admit of must be built on the old

<sup>9</sup> William Alexander, 'Congratulatory Address to the Alumni and Friends of the College, in *Inauguration of James McCosh, D.D., LL.D., as President of the College of New Jersey, Princeton*, (New York, 1868), 21-23.

<sup>10</sup> John Maclean, 'Speech on the Delivery of the Charter and Keys', in *Inauguration of James McCosh, D.D., LL.D., as President of the College of New Jersey, Princeton*, (New York: Scribner, 1868), 32-33.

<sup>11</sup> Maclean to Brown, 11 December 1852, in *Letters on the True Relations of Church and State to Schools and Colleges*, edited by Matthew Hope, (Princeton: John Robinson, 1853), 7.

foundation'.<sup>12</sup> McCosh kept his promise by blending Princeton's traditional commitment to Calvinist principles whilst restructuring the curriculum to better address the modern needs of Princeton graduates. Its intended effect was the production of moral and pious men who possessed useful knowledge upon entering public life. McCosh believed that Princeton's focus on educating future ministers impaired its ability to prepare graduates for secular professions. He therefore restructured the curriculum under the four branches of Language, Literature, Science, and Philosophy where 'every department of true scholarship and knowledge [were taught], taking care to leave out all that was fictitious and pretentious'.<sup>13</sup> At the end of his twenty years as president, McCosh remarked that 'we give instruction in a greater number of branches than are usually taught in the universities of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and nearly all the branches taught in Germany'.<sup>14</sup> This progressive expansion of the curriculum changed Princeton's institutional purpose whilst introducing a new type of Enlightenment. Scottish philosophy occupied a significant role in McCosh's Enlightenment, albeit not in the same fashion as practised during earlier Scottish and Princeton Enlightenments. According to McCosh, Scottish philosophy furnished the 'bones rather than the flesh or muscles' of a theorist's moral thought.<sup>15</sup> At Princeton, McCosh revived a sophisticated use of Scottish philosophy not only in his lectures of the History of Philosophy, Psychology, Contemporary Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Metaphysics but also in print.<sup>16</sup> His exploratory biography, *Scottish Philosophy* (1875), of leading Scottish Enlightenment moralists associated with

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<sup>12</sup> McCosh, *Twenty Years*, 8.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>15</sup> James McCosh, *Scottish Philosophy The Scottish Philosophy: Biographical, Expository, Critical, from Hutcheson to Hamilton*, (New York: Scribner, 1875), 2.

<sup>16</sup> McCosh, *Twenty Years*, 28.

the Scottish School of Common Sense illustrated his interpretation of these earlier theorists as well as reconstructing the tradition of Scottish philosophy to his situation at Princeton.<sup>17</sup>

McCosh's ideas on a properly regulated liberal and Christian education developed from his earlier studies at Edinburgh. Although McCosh attended Edinburgh shortly after Dugald Stewart's 1828 death, the memory of his systematic use of Scottish philosophy remained, particularly through William Hamilton's teachings, which he credited 'as showing a knowledge far more extensive than that of Hutcheson, or Reid, or Stewart, or Brown'.<sup>18</sup> Through Hamilton's instruction McCosh drew from the 'method, doctrine, and spirit' of Scottish philosophy and later defended its use as the best way to examine intuitive knowledge and powers of the mind.<sup>19</sup> While he praised Scottish theorists and recommended at Princeton that the theories of 'Reid and Hamilton should be studied together', McCosh revealed reasons why his philosophy was different.<sup>20</sup> He wrote:

I am represented as being of the Scottish school of philosophy. I adhere to it in one important principle: I believe that the truths of mental philosophy are to be discovered by a careful observation and induction of what passes in the mind. But in other respects I differ from the Scottish school. I profess to get my philosophy from the study of the human mind directly, and not from the teaching of others. The Scottish school maintains that we know only the qualities of things; I say we know the things themselves. So I call my philosophy Realism, and by help of a few obvious distinctions I hope to establish it. Hamilton makes our knowledge relative; I make it positive.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See Cairns Craig, 'Scotland's Migrant Philosophers and the History of Scottish Philosophy', *History of European Ideas*, (forthcoming in 2013).

<sup>18</sup> James McCosh, *The Life of James McCosh, a record chiefly autobiographical*, edited by William Milligan Sloane, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897), 40.

<sup>19</sup> See James McCosh, *An Examination of Mr J.S. Mill's Philosophy; being a defence of fundamental truth*, (London: Macmillan, 1866).

<sup>20</sup> James McCosh, *Syllabus of Lectures on Philosophy*, (Princeton, 1882), 129.

<sup>21</sup> McCosh, *Twenty Years*, 29-30. On the early foundations of the 'Positivist' tradition see John Wright, 'The Scientific Reception of Hume's Theory of Causation: Establishing the Positivist Interpretation in Early Nineteenth-Century Scotland', in *The Reception of David Hume in Europe*, edited by Peter Jones, (New York: Continuum, 2005), 327-347.

Like Reid, McCosh's moral philosophy supported 'Scottish Realism' whilst opposing the thought of 'Scottish Idealists' who were influenced by Kant. His use of Scottish philosophy was also linked to what he hoped to achieve in America. McCosh claimed that 'my ambition to aid a little in the foundation of an American philosophy which, as a philosophy of facts, will be found to be consistent with a sound theology'.<sup>22</sup> This ambition to unite philosophical truths and revealed religion certainly resembled Witherspoon's legacy.

Despite a vested interest in fostering an American philosophy, his courses on mental science were not a graduation requirement for everyone (though he claimed to have taught over three thousand across his time at Princeton).<sup>23</sup> Moreover, Professors Ormond and Patton taught the mandatory philosophy courses of Ethics and Logic.<sup>24</sup> McCosh believed that all branches of knowledge depended upon the exercise of the faculties and operations of the mind and that the careful study of these branches, in turn, exercised the mind. This pedagogical concept appealed to the earlier writings of Dugald Stewart. Similar to Stewart, McCosh argued that 'the business of a college is to teach scientific principles capable of all sorts of practical application'.<sup>25</sup>

This expansion of Princeton's curriculum under the four branches of knowledge necessitated changes in how Princeton degrees were earned and the importance of all faculty members in realising McCosh's Enlightenment. In previous years, the limited course offerings permitted their mandatory attendance by most students (with few

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<sup>22</sup> McCosh, *Twenty Years*, 30.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> McCosh, *Twenty Years*, 20. Dugald Stewart taught that 'the system of education which is proper to be adopted in particular cases, ought, undoubtedly, to have some reference to [the particular] circumstances; and to be calculated, as much as possible, to develop and to cherish those intellectual and active principles, in which a natural deficiency is most to be apprehended' (Stewart, *Elements*, 25).

exceptions of students by-passing the first two years of study). At the time of McCosh's appointment, Princeton's faculty consisted of sixteen academics (ten professors, four tutors, and two teachers).<sup>26</sup> Twenty years later the Princeton faculty was enlarged to forty (thirty-five professors, three tutors, and two lecturing assistants).<sup>27</sup> The increased employment of professors and decrease of tutors was not circumstantial. Similar to Stewart's earlier belief that young men should draw upon the example of accomplished men, McCosh instituted that freshmen (who had previously received instruction exclusively from tutors) now had at least one or more professors who taught first year courses. According to McCosh, 'the strength of our college lies in its staff of professors'.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, Princeton's earlier practise of mandatory coursework could not sustain a student population of over 600 students or a diversified curriculum. McCosh, therefore, implemented an elective system where students, after completing the first two years of mandatory classes including ethics and the relation between science and religion which Witherspoon had established, then selected courses in their field of interest. This was intended to mould a Princeton education to the individual needs of its students whilst continuing Princeton's traditional values. He remarked that 'I adopt the new [and] retain what is good in the old'.<sup>29</sup> By allowing students to focus the final years of study on their particular field of interest, McCosh believed

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<sup>26</sup> McCosh, *Twenty Years*, 22.

<sup>27</sup> At the time of McCosh's resignation, Princeton had 'three professors of Mental Philosophy, two of Greek, two of Latin, three of Mathematics, three of English including oratory, two of History and Political Science, three of modern Languages, two of Physics, two of Astronomy, two of Chemistry, three of natural Sciences, including Botany, Zoology, and Geography, three of Engineering, and two of Art' (Ibid., 23).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>29</sup> McCosh, *A New Departure in College Education, Being a Reply to President Eliot's Defence of it in New York* (New York: Scribner, 1885), 16.

Princetonians would be better prepared to enter specialised or vocational training of a particular field. In practise, students ‘meaning to be a minister will probably elect some branch of philosophy; the intending doctor will probably take botany and zoology; and the lawyer history or social sciences’.<sup>30</sup> In doing so, McCosh departed from the earlier Princeton and Scottish Enlightenment’s pedagogical convention of building an education toward understanding and adopting the ideas taught in the moral philosophy course. As W.B. Carnochan has shown, McCosh’s so-called ‘Trinity of studies’ (humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences) appealed to the examples Cambridge and Oxford not the paradigms at Scottish universities, which were prominent Scottish Enlightenment institutions.<sup>31</sup>

McCosh’s restructured curriculum offered students limited freedom to choose the path of their studies not the purpose of Princeton’s Enlightenment. This differed from Harvard’s design that practised an elective system where students determined all the courses that formed their degree.<sup>32</sup> The president of Harvard, Charles Eliot, claimed that ‘in a university the student must choose his studies and govern himself’.<sup>33</sup> The significant difference between McCosh’s curriculum and practises at Harvard centered on the extent of the relationship between the faculty and students.<sup>34</sup> McCosh believed it incumbent upon the faculty to monitor closely how students interpreted the liberal branches of education and correct them when necessary toward their virtuous and religious qualities. McCosh remarked that ‘in every college the Faculty should look after, not only the

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<sup>30</sup> McCosh, *Twenty Years*, 19.

<sup>31</sup> W.B. Carnochan, *The Battleground of the Curriculum: Liberal education and American Experience*, (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 21.

<sup>32</sup> Carnochan, *The Battleground of the Curriculum*, 19.

<sup>33</sup> McCosh, *A New Departure in College Education*, 3.

<sup>34</sup> Carnochan, *The Battleground of the Curriculum*, 9.

intellectual improvement, but the morals of those committed to their care'.<sup>35</sup> For this reason, he appointed professors 'of mature life, [and] of high ability and character [who were] likely to promote the moral and religious welfare of the students'.<sup>36</sup> In this important respect, Princeton professors made McCosh's Enlightenment possible.

McCosh's administration surpassed Smith's achievements in expanding the liberal branches of knowledge at Princeton. Similar to Smith, McCosh's philosophy encountered controversy with religious fundamentalists at Princeton. For example, his support of Darwinian evolution received harsh criticism from the principal of Princeton Theological Seminary, Charles Hodge who argued that Darwinism was contrary to notions of divine design and thus atheistic.<sup>37</sup> McCosh wrote that 'I was not a week in Princeton till I let it be known to the upper classes of the college that I was in favor of evolution properly limited and explained; and I have proclaimed my views in lectures and papers in a number of cities and before various associations, literary and religious'.<sup>38</sup> His promotion of evolution led conservative Presbyterians, such as Hodge, to question how Princeton's Enlightenment under McCosh would affect American Protestantism. While these tensions did not result in a counter-Enlightenment agenda as it had during Smith's administration, conservative Presbyterian ministers questioned if McCosh's administration measured up to Witherspoon's legacy. Although ample evidence suggests McCosh attempted to create Enlightenment at Princeton, perhaps he should be treated with more caution as a representative of the Scottish Enlightenment or as succeeding Witherspoon's legacy at Princeton. He did, however, fulfill other expectations. McCosh's

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<sup>35</sup> McCosh, *Twenty Years*, 48.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>37</sup> See Charles Hodge, *What is Darwinism?*, (New York: Scribner, Armstrong and Company, 1874).

<sup>38</sup> James McCosh, *The Religious Aspect of Evolution*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888), x-xi.

lectures at Princeton were later published and found an audience as far away as India, Japan, and Ceylon.<sup>39</sup> In this regard, McCosh created a unique Enlightenment that united Princeton's traditional values and modernity, and diffused these ideas to the wider world.

### **Conclusion**

The historiography of the eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment has turned its sight on its transnational reception. Investigating the diffusion of these ideas across national borders and time has shown the adaptability of Common Sense philosophy as well as their historical significance in shaping notions of modernity. Comparative case studies of figures such as Reid, Witherspoon, Stewart, Smith, and McCosh reveals how the different circumstances and interests across generations and national cultures altered the prominent ideas and values of the Scottish Enlightenment. This thesis has shown an intellectual connection between Scotland and the United States as well as the existence of counter-Enlightenments that targeted these ideas on both sides of the Atlantic. While this project was not intended to trace comprehensively these connections, it provides an example of the tension that existed between eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy and counter-Enlightenment interests of the Atlantic World. The Scottish Enlightenment's legacy in Scotland and early America existed in various ways, but none more revealing than its place in institutions of higher education. The myriad of reasons why Scottish Enlightenment thought and values flourished and declined in Scottish and early American pedagogical contexts have yet to be fully revealed. This thesis has taken an important step toward a better understanding the Scottish Enlightenment and its counter-Enlightenment in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Atlantic World.

<sup>39</sup> McCosh, *Twenty Years*, 28-29, 66.



## Bibliography

### **Primary Sources I: Dugald Stewart and the Edinburgh Context**

#### Note on the Sources

In examining Stewart's system of moral education, the thesis drew primarily from Stewart's published works and his unpublished lecture notes. These sources were found in the Dugald Stewart Collection (Dc.6.111) at the University of Edinburgh Library Special Collections and amongst its holdings. The thesis is not an exhaustive exploration of Stewart's moral philosophy and as such a number of Stewart's publications and unpublished manuscripts did not appear in this project.

#### Published works of Dugald Stewart

Stewart, Dugald, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, vol. one, (Edinburgh:

William Creech, 1792). (second edition published by Creech in 1802).

\_\_\_\_\_, *Outlines of Moral Philosophy, for the use of Students in the University of Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1793). (second edition published by Creech 1801).

\_\_\_\_\_, *Account of the Life and Writings of William Robertson* (originally read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1796), (Edinburgh: Creech, 1801).

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**Primary Sources II: Samuel Stanhope Smith and the Princeton Context****Note on the Sources**

In examining Smith's system of moral education, the thesis used his published works, unpublished lecture notes, and unpublished manuscripts of his contemporaries housed at Princeton University Library Special Collections (Smith Collection C0028; Witherspoon Collection C0274; Green Collection C0257; Reade Letters C1272; Lindsley Letters C1111; Biddle Letters C1013; and Rush Collection C0079) and unpublished lecture notes and Trustee and Faculty minutes housed at the Seeley Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. The thesis did not attempt a comprehensive analysis of Smith's moral philosophy and theology, therefore, a number of Smith's published and unpublished works did not appear in this project.

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## Appendix







SAMUEL STANHOPE SMITH AND COMMON SENSE PHILOSOPHY  
AT PRINCETON

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I discuss how Samuel Stanhope Smith advanced Reidian themes in his moral philosophy and examine their reception by Presbyterian revivalists Ashbel Green, Samuel Miller, and Archibald Alexander. Smith, seventh president and moral philosophy professor of the College of New Jersey (1779–1812), has received marginal scholarly attention regarding his moral philosophy and rational theology, in comparison to his predecessor John Witherspoon. As an early American philosopher who drew on the ideals of the Scottish Enlightenment including Common Sense philosophy, Smith faced heightened scrutiny from American revivalists regarding the danger his epistemology presented to the institution of religion. The Scottish School of Common Sense was widely praised and applied in nineteenth-century American moral philosophy, but before the more general American acceptance of Common Sense, Smith already appealed to Reidian themes in his methodology and treatment of external sensations, internal sensations, intellectual powers, and active powers of the human mind. In this paper, I argue that Smith's use of Reidian themes for grooming his student's morality conflicted with the educational expectations from revivalists on Princeton's board of trustees who demanded more attention on orthodox theology. I identify Smith's notions of causation, liberty, and the moral faculty as primary reasons for this tension over Princeton's educational purpose during the first decade of the nineteenth century.

Key Terms: Reid; Samuel Stanhope Smith; American revivalism; religion; morality; causation; liberty

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## INTRODUCTION

Samuel Stanhope Smith, seventh president and moral philosophy professor of the College of New Jersey (1779–1812), provides a compelling example of an early American who drew on the ideals of the Scottish Enlightenment including the Common Sense philosophy of Thomas Reid. Reid's influence on Smith's epistemology is particularly evident in his treatment of active powers of the human mind. Smith remarked that 'in this field no writer has distinguished himself with greater zeal, ability, and success than Dr Reid of Glasgow, first in his treatise on the *human mind*, and afterwards in his essays on the *intellectual*, and the *active powers of man*' (Smith 1812: 139). He continued by stating that 'to no author is this branch of science, not to Locke himself, more indebted for its approaches towards perfection' (Smith 1812: 139). However, Smith did not strictly follow all of Reid's theories or limit his philosophical inquiries to those found in Reid's publications. Yet, Smith drew on the methodology of Reid's Common Sense philosophy as an empirically based and religiously acceptable system for Princeton's moral philosophy curriculum. This article investigates how Smith developed Reidian Common Sense themes to advance his objective of moulding future virtuous leaders of the new republic.

The new republic's educators, politicians, and ministers feared that civic virtue and social order were in danger after the Revolution's republican zeal faded at the turn of the nineteenth century. During the rise in religious revivals, many Presbyterian ministers continued the earlier revivalist belief that Scripture and the conversion experience motivated moral actions. In contrast, Smith relied on Reid's notions of moral liberty and moral judgement which made men responsible for determining moral and immoral actions. Reid noted that 'by the liberty of a moral agent, I understand, a power over the determinations of his own will' (Reid 1788: 267). An enlightened education based on the philosophic study of human nature coupled with experience, for Smith, cultivated a person's innate moral judgment in determining moral or immoral actions. Furthermore, Smith believed that, via moral liberty, the divinely inspired human constitution could morally act or refrain from action when this was fairly evaluated by the mind. He remarked that 'moral philosophy is an investigation of the constitution and laws of mind, especially as it is endued with the power of voluntary action, and is susceptible of the sentiments of duty and obligation' (Smith 1812: 12). Therefore, by extension an enlightened education which was centred on Common Sense philosophy, for Smith, produced moral or virtuous citizens who could potentially influence the moral character of the early republic as professional and political leaders. In this article, I argue that Smith's use of Reidian themes, particularly his notions of liberty, causation, and the moral faculty, for grooming his student's morality conflicted with the educational expectations from revivalist trustees who demanded more attention on orthodox theology. This tension never surfaced in American print culture or in

a climactic event, but it suggests how and why revivalism resurfaced at Princeton after a brief glimpse of liberalism under Smith's presidency. This investigation focuses on the arrival of Common Sense to Princeton; Smith's balance between rational theology and Common Sense philosophy; and the revivalists' reception of Smith's notions of causation, liberty and the moral faculty. These together demonstrate that Reid had a profound impact on Princeton's educational aims during Smith's presidency.

#### I. THE ARRIVAL OF COMMON SENSE TO PRINCETON

From what little we know about Samuel Stanhope Smith, born on 15 March 1751 in Pequea, Pennsylvania, evidence suggests he displayed an intellectual curiosity that often did not conform to Presbyterian and philosophic traditions. His intellectual pursuits in the subjects of morality, theology, mathematics, history, poetry, jurisprudence, metaphysics, political economy, *Belles Lettres* and natural sciences demonstrated his versatility across disciplines, not unlike his Scottish polymath contemporaries. Fredric Beasley remarked that even at a young age 'Smith made the best of his opportunities, and was distinguished for his improvement in every branch to which he directed his attention' (Beasley 1860: 335). Smith's auspicious childhood education at his father's, Robert Smith's, Presbyterian academy in Pequea encouraged his interest in the ministry and helped to establish the foundations of his knowledge of classical languages and English prose. His early education undoubtedly included further instruction and useful connections with leading Presbyterian revivalists from his mother, Susan (Blair) Smith, whose father, Reverend Samuel Blair, garnered praise for educating revivalist ministers at Fagg's Manor academy. Blair's Fagg's Manor academy 'trained several eminent Presbyterian ministers and laymen, including Revd Samuel Davies (1723–61), colonial Virginia's greatest Presbyterian revivalist and a future president of the College of New Jersey' (Miller 2003: 412).

The decision for Smith to continue his seminary preparation at the College of New Jersey appeared logical considering Robert Smith's fervent revivalist sentiments and the fact that the College was temporarily governed in 1766 by his maternal uncle Revd Dr John Blair. Smith's mastery of Latin and Greek during his training at Pequea permitted him to enter Princeton's junior class at the age of sixteen under the tutelage of Joseph Periam. Samuel Monk noted that to Robert Smith's dismay 'Periam was one of the zealous adherents that Bishop Berkley's idealism had found in America, and under his influence Smith adopted Berkeley's philosophy' (Monk 1946: 89). George Berkeley believed his notions of immaterialism supported revealed religion by rationally disproving the materialistic distractions of the external world. Berkeley remarked 'that if we have any knowledge at all of external things, it must be by reason, inferring

their existence from what is immediately perceived by sense' (Berkeley 1820: 31). Smith excelled in his studies at Princeton and graduated valedictorian in 1769 at the first commencement during John Witherspoon's presidency. James Madison, as a Princeton student in attendance, commented that 'the head oration, which is always given to the greatest scholar by the President and Tutors, was pronounced in Latin by Mr. Samuel Smith, son of a Presbyterian minister in Pennsylvania' (Madison 1865: 2). After graduation Smith continued his seminary studies first with his father at Pequea Academy and the following year with Witherspoon at Princeton. His connections with Princeton's faculty and the board of trustees during his tenure as a student, tutor, and later as a professor provided Smith more latitude during the eighteenth century in developing his moral philosophy than previous scholarship has shown. Monk remarked that 'the homogeneity of the Presbyterian community into which he was born accounts for the apparent inbreeding which connected him by blood or by association with the men who founded the college or who guided it throughout its first half-century' (Monk 1946: 86). These close connections with Princeton's faculty and trustees certainly had a significant influence on his decision in returning to New Jersey after his graduation in 1769 for a couple of years as a tutor and from 1779 to 1812 as the professor of moral philosophy and eventually succeeding Witherspoon as president in 1795.<sup>1</sup>

Calvinism at the College of New Jersey from its establishment in 1746 until well after the end of Smith's academic tenure in 1812 had a great influence on the trustees' vision of the purpose of the University. William Armstrong Dod, for example, commented that 'it cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the College of New Jersey is not only religious in its principles, but was the necessary and only possible product of religion' (Dod 1844: 2). Dod's claim might appear obvious since Princeton initially served the educational needs of aspiring Presbyterian pastors and the first five Presidents made their names as revivalists.<sup>2</sup> Early descriptions of Princeton provide insight into how religion, particularly the tenets of revivalism, shaped its initial educational purpose. During the founding years, the College of New Jersey solicited funds from British individuals and societies with the clear purpose of educating future ministers. The SSPCK, an Edinburgh based Presbyterian society, financially contributed to the College in support of their aim to educate students 'intended principally for training up for the ministry'.<sup>3</sup> In 1754, Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Davies reported to the Synod of New York, during a British fund raising tour, of their success. In this report, Tennent and Davies commented that their students exhibited 'promising genius, Calvinistic principles, and in the judgement of charity, experimentally acquainted with the work of saving grace, and to have a distinguished zeal for the glory of God, and salvation of men.'<sup>4</sup> In the context of an ecclesiastically divided colonial America, their description of religious enthusiasm amongst the student body exemplified their attachments to revivalism

supported by the Synod of New York. The death of President Samuel Finley in 1766 offered the Princeton trustees an opportunity to bridge the gap between the New Side (revivalists) and Old Side (orthodox Calvinists).<sup>5</sup> The decision to elect John Witherspoon, who as a Paisley minister acquired notoriety for his satirical attacks against the Moderate Scottish literati, seemed logical considering he did not partake in earlier American ecclesiastical debates over the Westminster Confession of Faith on which differing opinions persisted even after the resolution of 1758.<sup>6</sup>

As Princeton's sixth President (1768–94), Witherspoon surpassed his predecessors in educational modernization by removing George Berkley's idealism from the curriculum and restructuring the College with an emphasis on modern Scottish texts.<sup>7</sup> Witherspoon commented that 'the immaterial system is a wild and ridiculous attempt to unsettle the principles of common sense by metaphysical reasoning, which can hardly produce anything but contempt in the generality of persons who hear it' (Witherspoon 1822: 21). Philip Lindsley noted that 'when Dr Witherspoon arrived from Scotland, he brought with him the works of several distinguished Scottish philosophical writers, particularly Reid and Beattie'<sup>8</sup> (Lindsley 1858: 336). Witherspoon anticipated that revivalists would misunderstand why he included works of the Scottish Enlightenment considering they believed revelation provided an absolute moral code of conduct. Witherspoon clarified that 'I do not know anything that serves more for the support of religion than to see, from the different and opposite systems of philosophers, that there is nothing certain in their schemes, but what is coincident with the word of God' (Witherspoon 1822: 6). Smith's religious publications reflected Witherspoon's fundamental belief that 'if the Scripture is true, the discoveries of reason cannot be contrary to it' (*ibid*). Smith's close relationship with Witherspoon however must not obscure Smith's enthusiasm for Reid's philosophy in his published *Lectures* (1812). Smith's moral philosophy lectures incorporated a sophisticated metaphysics which was clearly inspired by Reid. Witherspoon's success in advocating the balance between Christianity and the humanistic perspective of the Scottish Enlightenment during his presidency certainly permitted Smith's later devoted use of Common Sense philosophy. But instead of following Witherspoon's example, as an educator, of avoiding a definitive stance on controversial philosophical topics such as liberty and necessity by eclectically drawing on various positions, Smith assumed, like Reid, a common sense stance (Sloan 1971: 123–5). During the Revolution and the Federalist debates Witherspoon, as a signer of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution, was sporadically absent from Princeton and during his absences he relied on Smith for College administration and teaching of the senior year moral philosophy course. However, 'it was he (Witherspoon) who gave range and spirit to the course of study' (*Memorial* 1898: 110). Therefore, the content and reception of Smith's moral philosophy is best judged during his presidency from

1795 to 1812. Smith's reliance on Reidian themes for his objective of grooming virtuous citizens was not initially problematic to Princeton's trustees.

The American Revolution caused havoc on Princeton's campus and also temporarily altered the board of trustees' vision of the College's educational purpose. During the Revolution, Princeton's campus served as barracks for British and American soldiers and the scene for a battle which 'the inside of the church, as well as of the College edifice, was destroyed by the British and American armies' (MacLean 1877: 265). The trustees expressed a desire to remake Princeton into the premier American institution for a liberal arts education and attract students from the southern states who often sought advanced degrees in Europe.<sup>9</sup> The 19 February 1796 amendment to the Charter of the College of New Jersey, one year after Smith's election to the office of president, exemplified this new emphasis on liberal arts and Smith's goal of moulding virtuous leaders. The amended Charter outlined financial support from the state of New Jersey with the intention to 'patronize and promote the interest of science and literature, as the surest basis of their liberty, property and prosperity' (Princeton Charter 1868: 19). Although Princeton's trustees influenced the laws and administration of Princeton, Smith as president directed the curriculum and proposed modern alterations in sciences and languages. During his presidency, Princeton witnessed the birth of America's first degree awarding scientific program in 1799 and liberal educational initiatives clearly intended to foster the moral development of potential enlightened scholars and statesmen not ministers. Within his first year as president, Smith oversaw the appointment of Princeton's and America's first professor of chemistry, John MacLean. Smith publically remarked in the *Woods Newark Gazette* and *New Jersey Adviser* on 11 November 1795 that MacLean's mastery of chemistry and comparative anatomy also has 'application to agriculture and manufactures, so useful in every country, but especially in a new one' (MacLean 1876: 20). In the spirit of a practical liberal education, Smith did not ignore the political currents of the world and the impact that they would undoubtedly have on his students after graduation. European and American heads of state anxiously observed French politics and the later aggressive expansion of Napoleonic France. With this in mind, it is reasonable to assume that Smith believed his students, as potential American politicians, would benefit learning French, since France owned western territory well beyond the Appalachian Mountains until 1803 and France played a prominent role in American foreign affairs. The appointment of William Thompson as Professor of Language (1802–08) exemplified Smith's clear aim to groom enlightened and polite leaders of the new republic. He remarked to Revd John Hobert that 'there is a young gentleman of very polite accomplishments from Paris, already teaching the French language in the college'.<sup>10</sup> His praise of Thompson's 'polite accomplishments' and his own personal practises of politeness in manner and dress partly indicate that Smith's values were not typical amongst Presbyterian divines who promoted modest manners and appearance.

Archibald Alexander commented on Smith's noticeable differences compared with his Presbyterian contemporaries during their encounter at the 1791 American General Assembly. Alexander observed:

When he entered the house I did not observe him, but happening to turn my head I saw a person whom I must still consider the most elegant I ever saw. The beauty of his countenance, the clear and vivid complexion, the symmetry of his form and the exquisite finish of his dress, were such as to strike the beholder at first sight. The thought never occurred to me that he was a clergyman, and I supposed him to be some gentleman of Philadelphia, who had dropped in to hear the debate. I ought to have mentioned that Dr Witherspoon was as plain an old man as ever I saw, and as free from any assumption of dignity. (Alexander 1854: 99)

Alexander's description of Smith's polite appearance alone did not give an impression that he disapproved of clergymen engaging in politeness. However, his comparison between Smith and Witherspoon, who many revivalist clergymen including Alexander and Green idealised, insinuated that Witherspoon was their prototype for a pious and enlightened minister. The 1791 American General Assembly also observed a clear distancing on the part of Smith from revivalists. Ashbel Green, after returning from the General Association of Connecticut, proposed that the General Assembly join Connecticut's enthusiastic revival of religion movement. Although Smith was not as outspoken against this proposition as Dr Francis Alison, he still boldly opposed the spread of revivalism (Alexander 1854: 100). Although his 1791 public opposition to revivalism marked one of many impending religious divisions between him and future Princeton trustees, the root of their subtle discord involved their conflicting visions of Princeton's education. As a consequence of the increased demand for ministers in newly populated regions of the early republic and the appointment of revivalists to the board of trustees at the turn of the nineteenth century, Princeton trustees led by Ashbel Green, Samuel Miller, and Archibald Alexander questioned the effectiveness of Smith's curriculum in grooming moral citizens and generating direly needed Presbyterian ministers. How Smith drew on Reidian themes partially shows why Princeton revivalists who wanted to rekindle the College's seminary preparation disapproved of his Common Sense curriculum.

## II. SMITH'S COMMON SENSE AND RATIONAL THEOLOGY: A PERFECT MARRIAGE OR SEPARATE OFFICES?

During Smith's presidency, Common Sense philosophy and Reidian notions of the external and internal sensations of the human mind provided the essential



foundation for Smith's philosophical teaching and helped to precipitate his conflicts with orthodox Calvinism. Mark Noll's *Princeton and the Republic* (1989) demonstrated how Smith's moral philosophy drew on Common Sense methodology and the Reidian themes of external sensations and internal sensations in advancing Witherspoon's 'republican Christian Enlightenment'. Noll argued:

Stanhope Smith erected his intellectual system on four principles: that philosophy in a Newtonian mode yielded rewards as rich for the moral world as the physical world; that human nature was a source of experience from which moral laws could be formed; that moral principles influenced social life directly; and that the results of moral principles could be harmonized with an enlightened interpretation of biblical religion. (Noll 1989: 191)

Smith's *Lectures on Moral Philosophy* (1812) provided ample support for the first three principles that Noll identified and his *Sermons* (1799) encouraged the marriage of 'true' reason and biblical religion. However, Smith's varied treatment of revelation suggests that a paradoxical relationship existed between his rational theology and his support of Reidian active powers of the human mind. Smith's attempt to balance his Common Sense conclusions and his religious faith shows the difficulty of this enlightened objective. It is plausible that Smith compartmentalized his metaphysical philosophy from his sermons based on religious faith. The difference in his treatment of revelation from the pulpit and lecture halls gives weight to this possibility. Of course, Smith formatted his sermons and lectures differently in tone and substance to support his separate agendas of guiding his congregation toward Christian conversion and, by extension, salvation, and cultivating his students' innate faculties of the mind. I argue that Smith's perspective on the practical uses of revelation, as Princeton's president and moral philosophy professor, differed in significant respects from the revelation he preached. An accurate interpretation of these distinct agendas requires an understanding of the role that revelation played in his sermons and of the pillars of Common Sense on which Smith built his metaphysical philosophy. His clear support of Common Sense philosophy at Princeton, while still complementing his rational theology, treated revelation differently from his sermons in certain respects based on the circumstances.

Smith's use of Reidian Common Sense themes did not occur without subtle and obvious adaptations that served his objective of expanding the liberal arts and natural sciences at Princeton. Common Sense philosophy offered an empirical alternative to what Reid identified as the 'ideal system' or 'ideal hypothesis.' Reid contended that the metaphysical theories that followed the Cartesian tradition, particularly those of Hume, Malbranche, Descartes,

Berkeley, and Locke, err in their method founded on rational hypotheses. He remarked:

I thought it unreasonable, my Lord, upon the authority of philosophers, to admit a hypothesis which, in my opinion, overturns all philosophy, all religion and virtue, and all common sense and finding that all systems concerning the human understanding which I was acquainted with, were built upon this hypothesis, I resolved to inquire into this subject anew, without regard to any hypothesis. (Reid 1785: viii)

Smith advanced this central Reidian belief that metaphysical philosophy should 'be relieved from the philosophic delirium of hypothesis, and form her judgments on experience and fact, interpreted by plain common sense' (Smith 1812: 20). The Common Sense alternative to the 'ideal hypothesis' depended on reconfiguring metaphysical philosophy's methodology from rationalism to an empirical realism. Hume's *Treatise* also aimed at legitimizing the scientific study of the human mind by utilizing the scientific method of observation and experiment. Hume's *Treatise* claimed to encourage a 'cautious observation of human life, and take them as they appear in the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures' (Hume 2007: 46). Within this vein, Reid completely concurred with the Humean empiricist belief that the 'science of man' could be furthered from careful observation of human nature. However, by making our knowledge of the world wholly dependent on psychologically intermediate 'impressions', Hume (as Reid showed and Hume acknowledged) could not defend his 'science' against radical scepticism. Reid, a polymath whose interests included scientific endeavours, observed the progress that natural philosophy received from building on undisputable maxims.<sup>11</sup> The Common Sense system aimed to legitimize the study of human nature and the human mind as part of natural philosophy. Reid believed this aim was achievable due to the universal natural faculties and innate human reasoning. He remarked:

Common sense and reason have both one author; that almighty Author, in all whose other works we observe consistency, uniformity, and beauty, which charm and delight the understanding; there must, therefore, be some order and consistency in the human faculties, as well as in other parts of his workmanship. (Reid 1785: 132)

From their shared perspective that God created a uniform human constitution, Smith noted that 'the basis of all true science rests on the uniformity of nature in all her operations' (Smith 1812: 121). In their view, if every sane and lucid person possessed the same innate constitution they could reasonably deduce maxims based on the observation of human nature and introspective reflection of the

human mind. The uniformity of the human constitution continued as a significant thread throughout both Reid's and Smith's metaphysics and notions of morals. Smith clearly advanced that everyone possessed innate uniform faculties of the constitution that were susceptible for improvement. As a pragmatist, Reid made a case for the cultivation of various faculties of the human mind in advancing practical aims of improvement. Reid argued that even the

savage hath within him the seeds of the logician, the man of taste and breeding, the orator, the statesman, the man of virtue, and the saint; which seeds, though planted in his mind by nature, yet, through want of culture and exercise, must lie forever buried, and be hardly perceivable by himself or by others. (Reid 1822: 5)

The cultivation of these innate 'seeds' within the human constitution, for Reid, required experience observing human nature and an enlightened humanistic and liberal arts education. He later remarked 'that our happiness or misery in life, that our improvement in any art or science which we profess, and that our improvement in real virtue and goodness, depend in a very great degree on the train of thinking that occupies the mind both in our vacant and in our more serious hours' (Reid 1855: 297). This Reidian theme, if accepted, prioritised the cultivation of the innate faculties of the mind over other perceived avenues of improvement for the betterment of the individual and the wider society. Smith fully assumed this perspective by empirically explaining the faculties and operations of the human constitution with the clear intension of improving the Princeton students' morality. Smith certainly shared Reid's notions of improvement by claiming that 'human nature is discovered on more mature reflection, to be a means of carrying its faculties eventually to the highest pitch of improvement, and building on their improvement, the felicity of mankind' (Smith 1812: 34). The expanding cultural and religious diversification of the United States undoubtedly influenced Smith's belief that after his students' matriculated they would potentially encounter unfamiliar moral customs. On this note, Smith remarked:

Great equality of condition in the citizens of the United states, similarity of occupations, and nearly the same degree of cultivation, and social improvement pervading the whole, have produced such uniformity of character, that as yet, they are not strongly marked by such differences in the expression of the countenance, the composition of their features, or generally in their personal properties, as, in other countries, mark the grades between the superior and inferior orders of people. And yet there are beginning to be formed certain habits of countenance, the result chiefly of manners, which already serve, to a certain degree, to distinguish the natives of some of the states from those of others. Hereafter, doubtless, they will advance into more considerable, and characteristic distinctions. (Smith 1810: 168-9)

Smith's stance that morality was best understood by the relative moral norms that varied due to different climate and cultural circumstances surely appealed to Reid's emphasis on improving the faculties of the constitution by observing their situational practises within a given society. Smith remarked 'that although the Author of our being has planted within the human breast the seeds of moral discernment, they require, in order to arrive at full maturity, to be carefully cultivated' (Smith 1812: 311–2). The cultivation of moral judgement 'acquires strength by experience and reflection, and especially by profoundly observing the course of human conduct, and tracing its causes, motives, disguises, and consequences' (Smith 1812: 311–2). Smith later stipulated that 'the justice or benevolence of an act ought to be judged of differently, according to the mutual dependence of men and their natural expectations from one another, arising out of their social condition and the habits of their education' (Smith 1812: 322). The growing diversification of the new republic influenced Smith's support of Common Sense in his moral philosophy curriculum with the aim of equipping his students' to adapt their moral judgements within potentially varied moral customs.

By following Francis Bacon's inductive method the Common Sense system established unquestionable principles and from them tried rationally to deduce axioms on the operations of the human mind. Reid argued that Newton's *Regulae Philosophandi*, which drew on the inductive method, succeeded as 'maxims of common sense' and 'he who philosophizes by other rules, either concerning the material system, or concerning the mind, mistakes his aim' (Reid 1785: 3). Smith clearly shared this enthusiasm for the inductive method by stating that 'in the philosophy of man the same rules ought to be observed which have been followed in natural philosophy ever since the age of the great Newton' (Smith 1812: 19). Their shared praise of the inductive method as the best method for seeking replicable and verifiable truths in metaphysical inquiries does not necessarily demonstrate that Reid influenced Smith. However, the way Smith organized the first volume of his published lectures clearly drew on the structure of Reid's publications that systematically included ridiculing the 'ideal system' in the context of advancing Common Sense, investigating the principles and operations of the external sensations, and a lengthy discussion of the intellectual and active power of the mind.

The Common Sense system's scientific approach to moral and metaphysical philosophy advanced the existence and importance of God as the first cause of everything as the architect of the material world and the human constitution. However, it did not, like other philosophical systems, aim to prove the truthfulness of revelation as the exclusive or primary vehicle of human morality. On the contrary, they argued that God designed the human constitution with natural faculties that if properly conditioned could determine morality independent of revelation. Reid commented that 'revelation was not intended to supersede, but to aid the use of our natural faculties' (Reid 1788: 383). Smith advanced this Reidian

concept that ‘there is no doubt that these principles of our nature are liable to great imperfections and sometimes to gross mistakes, in judging both truth and duty; but they are the best means of directing our conduct and opinions which our Creator hath placed in our power’ (Smith 1812: 312–13). This might appear out of character for Smith who adamantly sought to prove the truthfulness of biblical religion in his *Essay on the Causes of Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species* (1787). In reading Smith’s publications an accurate understanding of his intended audience provides insight into his complex views on revelation and metaphysics.

Smith’s assertion that people instinctively possessed morality, albeit uncultivated, independent of revelation might appear religiously problematic for a Presbyterian minister, even one propagating rational theology. However, his published moral philosophy lectures, as a corrected version of those he delivered at Princeton, were narrowly intended for the improvement of young men between the ages of 14–18 and not the wider literate public. His well-received religious publications are one plausible reason why his Presbyterian peers did not immediately question his religious orthodoxy earlier in his academic career, aside from the fact that his lectures were published the same year as his resignation from the office of president. Although his rational theology reformed the Calvinist interpretation of biblical religion to compliment empirical science, there were no complaints about the content of his sermons. Smith did not receive these defaming criticisms, because he treated the role of revelation in human moral conduct differently in his sermons and in his lectures. In his lectures, revelation aided in the innate principles that guided voluntary moral or immoral actions as a subsidiary source of knowledge, and, by extension, a matured moral faculty enabled a better understanding of the author of the human constitution, God. However, from the pulpit, revelation remained the only source, in Smith’s view, for understanding the ‘essence of the Deity.’ On the topic of understanding God Smith remarked:

On a subject of which it is so far beyond the present powers of the human mind adequately to conceive, it becomes us to speak with modesty and caution. In judging of it, reason affords no lights to guide us – the fires of imagination will only mislead us – we must take our ideas solely from the Scriptures of Truth. (Smith 1821: 342)

Common Sense philosophy equally ridiculed the role of imagination in metaphysics practised by rationalists, but the cultivation of the human moral faculty or moral sense clearly aimed at providing insight into God’s moral intention for mankind. Smith’s contention in this sermon that revelation ‘solely’ informed mankind of divinity without mention of the divinely inspired human constitution suggests he either guarded his reputation as a minister against potential attacks or he harboured different beliefs on the relevance of revelation

relative to his positions as a clergymen and teacher. It is likely that for Smith both possibilities existed. In a sermon discussing the causes of infidelity, Smith commented:

In proportion as our manners daily degenerate, irreligion in principle more and more prevails. All moral and religious opinions, except those that are fixed by revelation, are in a state of perpetual flux and mutability. They have their fashions and pass away. (Smith 1799: 50–1)

Smith's belief, from the pulpit, that revelation functions as a permanent source of morality seems inherently contradictory with his metaphysical views on the active powers associated with the moral faculty. His development of Reid's notion on the uniformed human constitution and its susceptibility for improvement in his metaphysical lectures offered various avenues for the cultivation of morality including the study of human nature in history, introspective reflection, and observing morality in a given society. The perceived decay of societal morality and manners might hinder that particular avenue for the cultivation of the moral faculty, but it would not forfeit the others. I contend that Smith's notion of religious faith justified his dual treatment of revelation in his sermons and moral philosophy. Smith remarked:

An enlightened conscience imposes the most effectual restraints upon passions, which are the principles of evil in man. It unfolds the law on each case of conduct as it arises, and adds to the prescriptions of duty, the most powerful motives of obedience. Hence it is that *faith*, not, as the enemies of religion assert, a blind belief of uncertain facts, and unintelligible mysteries, but a clear understanding, and firm persuasion of the truths of the gospel, is laid, by the apostles, at the foundation of a good life, and thereby made the condition of our salvation. (Smith 1799: 322)

His notion of an enlightened conscience was interchangeable with his usage of the metaphysical concept of the moral sense or moral faculty. Smith's rational theology, similar to his metaphysical philosophy, acknowledged that an 'enlightened conscience' directed moral conduct. But his religious 'faith' dictated observing the 'truths of the gospel' for God's promised salvation after death. As a Presbyterian minister, Smith undoubtedly perceived that his primary responsibility involved promoting revelation as the only path towards his congregations' salvation. In contrast, his clear objective at Princeton, as evidenced by his moral philosophy modelled after Reid's *Common Sense*, centred on grooming his students' morality as potential leaders of the early republic. This suggests a different understanding of Smith's union of enlightened reason and religion than an unqualified harmonious one. Although Smith clearly infused

aspects of his metaphysical philosophy within his rational theology, his asserted faith as a clergyman, that revelation served as the only source to ascertain God's design marked his division not unity between religion and philosophy. As previously mentioned, Smith's division of his clerical and professorial objectives did not initially attract disapproval from Princeton's trustees. His philosophical notions of causation and liberty, on the other hand, fundamentally differed from those of the revivalist trustees.

### III. THE CONTROVERSY OVER CAUSATION AND LIBERTY

In the midst of the Revolution and the final years of his presidency at Hampden Sydney College in the late 1770s, Smith demonstrated a deep interest in the metaphysical themes of causation, liberty, and necessity. Smith remarked in a letter to James Madison:

You have frequently attacked me on that knotty question of liberty and necessity that has so much embarrassed philosophers, and has raised such furious war among divines. I have lately had occasion to write on philosophical subjects, and among others, on this question. I have read over your objections against the doctrine of moral liberty, for practically you seem to be one of its disciples. I remember the manner in which you have formerly expressed yourself upon that intricate subject; and, indeed, that express the difficulties that occurred to me in attempting to solve it. (Madison 1866: 187–8)

Smith's previous letter that he referenced has yet to surface, but his response indicates that he contemplated the themes of causation and liberty more than a decade before the publication of Reid's *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* (1788). The religious implications regarding God's perceived involvement in earthly actions and causes attracted controversy in the philosophical discussion of causation and liberty. As previously noted, Smith distinguished his rational theology from his metaphysical philosophy, the former spiritual and the latter practical, based on his religious faith that revelation provided the only avenue for salvation. While upholding central Calvinistic principles regarding revelation in his sermons, Smith avoided questions of his religious orthodoxy. Noll's *Princeton and the Republic* argued that, for Smith, 'problems came rather when these other disciples of John Witherspoon had occasion to question the results of Smith's educational leadership' (Noll 1989: 206). Revivalists on the board of trustees did indeed find cause to investigate Smith's Common Sense based curriculum after the number of Princeton graduates entering the ministry drastically dropped. Princeton's trustees, led by Green, Miller, and Alexander, heightened awareness of Smith's Common Sense curriculum surely pinpointed



the religious consequences of his treatment of causation, liberty and the moral faculty as problematic for the religious purpose that Princeton was intended to serve. Smith's undeveloped theories on liberty and causation circa 1778–79 once again found clarity in Reidian themes. Although Smith's religious publications advanced an enlightened interpretation of the gospel stylistically modelled after the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century French divines, he developed his metaphysics after the belief that 'the soundest metaphysicians, and the most accurate observers of the operations of the mind, agree with the learned and profound Dr Reid of Glasgow' (Smith 1816: 297). His advancement of Reidian notions of active powers of the human mind with original adaptations compared with revivalist views from Jonathan Edwards, Ashbel Green, and Samuel Miller suggests that the Princeton trustees' objections to Smith's presidency were ideologically deeper than merely his deficiency in producing ministers.

Reid's and Smith's notions of liberty and causation, as operating principles, had direct connections with their understanding of the moral faculty. The moral faculty or moral sense of the human mind perceives moral facts of the external world in a similar fashion as the self-evident external senses. Reid argued that 'the testimony of our moral faculty, like that of the external senses, is the testimony of nature, and we have the same reason to rely upon it' (Reid 1788: 238). The instinctive ability to perceive morality did not, for Smith and Reid, exist from birth in full maturity, but, as previously mentioned, required cultivating its judgment which was made possible by moral liberty. Reid remarked that 'every man is conscious of a power to determine, in things which he conceives to depend upon his determination' (Reid 1788: 59). Smith advanced a similar belief that God designed mankind in an image of his power to determine actions and 'in the control that he enjoys over his own will and over the actions of his mind, as well as of his body' (Smith 1812: 291). They maintained that God designed the human constitution with moral liberty which explained their observations of mankind's innate powers as agents of cause and moral agents. Smith appealed to Reid's notion of voluntary determination over the will by stating;

Although the mind determines all our other voluntary operations by the agency of the will; yet it does not thus determine the acts of the will. An act of the will is the determination of the mind with regard to some other object; not with regard to itself. The volitions of the mind are the effect of its own internal energy, not by a previous volition, but by an original, innate power over its own actions, of which every man who reflects upon himself is conscious. (Smith 1812: 283)

Their belief that the human constitution, if cultivated, innately possessed God's intended moral code independent of revelation proved problematic to orthodox Calvinists. William Weeks, a Princeton student, complained in 1808 that 'Reid



is grossly Arminian and advocates a self-determining power, which if it means anything, means that the creature is independent of the Creator'<sup>12</sup> (Sloan 1971: 166). Princeton's trustees, particularly Ashbel Green, shared Weeks' worries that Smith's reliance on Reidian themes endangered the theological development of Princeton's seminary students. The conflict between Smith's notion of moral liberty and Jonathan Edwards' concept of moral necessity involved the degree that motives influenced actions. Edwards argued that 'if the acts of the will are excited by motives, those motives are the causes of those acts of the will; which makes the acts of the will necessary; as effects necessarily follow the efficiency of the cause' (Edwards 1840: 264). The Edwardian argument that mankind necessarily acts according to the strongest motive resulted in prioritising revelation as motivating moral actions and forming 'a strong habit of virtue' (*ibid*: 46). Smith rejected that people were victims of motives and slaves of 'inclination, appétit, or passion, as it arises' (Smith 1812: 283). A cultivated moral judgment via humanistic education and experience, in Smith's view, could curb immediate immoral passions and appetites. Smith remarked:

True it is, the mind seldom or never acts without some present motive, that is, without some end in view at the time, although Dr Reid has rendered it probable that, on many occasions, it forms determinations without motive, by the immediate energy of its own self-control; yet no one motive, nor any assemblage of motives, has power to compel it to act in this or that particular direction. (Smith 1812: 284)

His central use of Reid's notion of moral liberty as a rational refutation of Edward's moral necessity made him more vulnerable to scrutiny from revivalist trustees who drew on Edward's moral theology. Green advanced that God directly influenced human actions of His converts. He noted that 'to the eye of contemplative and sober reason, willing to discern its Creator, a *present God* is recognised in all that we behold' (Green 1841: 216). For Green, the early republic's and Princeton's morality required Christian conversion and a close adherence to biblical doctrines of morality. Therefore, Green's moral theology intrinsically conflicted with Smith's moral philosophy that promoted the cultivation of the moral faculty. After students burned Nassau Hall in 1802, Princeton's primary teaching hall, the board of trustees reassured potential students and parents of the central role that revealed religion would in future have in Princeton's moral instruction.<sup>13</sup> While Smith solicited money for campus repairs in South Carolina, Green authored an eight page pamphlet on Princeton's educational aims. Green emphasised Princeton's 'aim to make this institution an asylum for pious youth'<sup>14</sup> (Green 1802: 2). In light of Green's moral theology, his perception of piety and its conflicted relationship with Common Sense philosophy greatly differed from those of Smith. Princeton trustees attributed the drastic drop

in ministers graduating from Princeton and the student disruptions in 1802 and 1807 as proof that Smith's reliance on Common Sense philosophy failed to fulfil their religious aims for the College. Smith's bold lectures supporting moral liberty undoubtedly added to the suspicion that Smith belonged to a former enlightened age.

Smith's 1799 election as Moderator of General Assembly and published *Sermons* (1799) undoubtedly delayed any immediate actions to replace him as Princeton's President and moral philosophy professor. Philip Lindsley observed that 'throughout the Middle and Southern States, he was regarded as the most eloquent and learned divine among his contemporaries' (Lindsley 1866: 653). However, his celebrated reputation as an enlightened divine did not prevent industrious actions on the part of Alexander and Green aimed at reforming Princeton's educational purpose and effectually replacing Smith as president. Smith undoubtedly realised this revivalist objective after the 1808 American General Assembly. Revd Archibald Alexander, as the former 1807 Moderator, addressed the 1808 General Assembly on the perceived problems in the seminary preparation of Presbyterian ministers. Alexander declared:

Our seminaries of learning, although increasing in literature and numbers, furnish us with few preachers. The great extension of the physical sciences, and the taste and fashion of the age, have given such a shape and direction to the academical course, that I confess, it appears to me to be little adapted to introduce a youth to the study of the sacred Scriptures. (Alexander 1854: 314–15)

Alexander obviously had Princeton as the target of this plea for revived piety and religion in American universities for the survival of presbyteries and by extension the salvation and morality of religiously unequipped Americans. Princeton, as the first and only American university at that time to offer a degree awarding program in the natural sciences, clearly received heightened attention after Alexander's speech. Ashbel Green clearly shared Alexander's proposed plan to revive formerly observed orthodox religious principles in Princeton's curriculum. Green stated that 'encouraged by this, I used all my influence in favour of the measure' (Green 1849: 333). Smith's defence of revelation in *Lectures on the Evidences of the Christian Religion* (1809) and *A Comprehensive View of the Leading and Most Important Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion* (1815) could be viewed as an attempt to contradict emerging doubts about his orthodoxy. However, it was not Smith's actions as a minister that revivalist trustees questioned but the metaphysical theories he espoused as Princeton's president and moral philosophy professor.

His support of the ability to acquire the divine moral code of conduct through the moral faculty undermined the importance of revealed religion for morality.

In contrast, Smith's chief critic, Ashbel Green, advanced the revivalists' belief that God's will 'is indicated by the connexion between his volition and the effects produced.' 'This connexion,' Green stressed, 'according to the sure testimony of divine revelation, is illimitably certain' (Green 1832: 104). Green accounted for the new republic's and Princeton's immorality as the result of a lack of religion. As the eldest son of Robert Smith, an ardent revivalist and founder of the Pequea Academy, Smith fully understood the American revivalists' educational aims. His decision to emphasise Common Sense philosophy during his presidency indicates his ideal type of Princeton graduate. He believed, like Reid, that the success of a civilized society depended on the promotion of enlightened education which cultivates individual citizens' moral faculties.<sup>15</sup> Smith noted 'that by such a fair and equitable use of reason as auxiliary to the moral sense, we shall often perceive the necessity of equal candour and caution in judging both of national manners and of individual conduct' (Smith 1812: 318). This explained why Smith's moral philosophy lectures, contrary to orthodox Calvinism, stressed actively improving moral judgement through enlightened education. Smith, during his forty years as an educator, clearly placed a higher priority in the moral development of his students as potential leaders of the new republic than avoiding potential religious controversy.

#### CONCLUSION

The philosophical and religious discord over the construction of the new republic's morality placed Samuel Stanhope Smith in a precarious situation between his support of Common Sense philosophy and revivalists on Princeton's board of trustees. The rise in religious revivals did not deter Smith's conviction that Reid's Common Sense philosophy had universal merit in building the moral character of the new republic. His goal of modelling Princeton after the ideals of the Scottish Enlightenment with an emphasis on Reid's Common Sense began to crumble when his opponents disbanded his degree awarding scientific program in 1809.<sup>16</sup> In 1812, Smith submitted his resignation supposedly due to his life long battle with tuberculosis, but it was no coincidence that his chief critic filled his vacated presidency.<sup>17</sup> Samuel Miller, a revivalist who shared Green's educational vision, individually petitioned the Princeton trustees to unanimously appoint Ashbel Green as President, not vice president as had been initially suggested. Smith noted years after his resignation that 'Dr Green has entirely disused my lectures on the Evidences of Religion and on Moral Philosophy, on the plea that they are not exactly conformed to his notions on the subject of divine grace' (Gillett 1864: 223). The fact that Green did not use Smith's moral philosophy lectures on the grounds of conflicting views of divine power provides further evidence that the revivalist trustees' objected to Smith's

use of Reidian themes. In the same year as Green's election, Green returned the favour by nominating Samuel Miller as Professor of Ecclesiastical History to the newly established Theological Seminary at Princeton that Archibald Alexander governed as president.<sup>18</sup> The election of Green, Alexander, and Miller to influential offices within Princeton and its infant seminary demonstrated the revivalists' triumph over Smith's Common Sense philosophy. The shift in Princeton's educational direction from Smith's liberal common sense to Green's orthodox Calvinism with an emphasis on revivalism exemplified one of the many consequences of the heightened religious interest within the new republic. As evidenced by the later acceptance of Common Sense philosophy in American universities, the religious objections to Smith's moral philosophy did not extend beyond the first half of nineteenth century. However, it showed the prevailing early American revivalist belief that at the turn of the nineteenth century American morality needed religion as a facilitator of morality more than Common Sense.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> During the last half of the eighteenth century Smith had family and friends who were trustees and presidents of the College of New Jersey. His father was close friends with Samuel Davies and shared the revivalist sentiments of Edwards and Tennent. Samuel

- Finley baptised Smith. Witherspoon was Smith's father-in-law. Finally, his father and maternal cousins were also trustees. The interconnected relationships amongst the New England Presbyterian divines afforded educational and ecclesiastical opportunities for those, like Smith, who were well connected.
- <sup>2</sup> The first five presidents of Princeton were Jonathan Dickinson (1747), Aaron Burr, Sr. (1748–57), Jonathan Edwards (1758), Samuel Davies (1759–61), and Samuel Finley (1761–66). For more information on the New Side and Old Side debates reference MacLean's *History of the College of New Jersey*, volume one; Sloan's *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal*.
- <sup>3</sup> *Register of the Actings and Proceedings of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge*, pp 435–436. I owe my knowledge of the SSPCK's financial connections with the College of New Jersey to Rusty Roberson's doctoral research.
- <sup>4</sup> Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Davies letter dated 25 October 1754 to the Synod of New York. Found in *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 264.
- <sup>5</sup> *ibid.* pp. 285–286.
- <sup>6</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>7</sup> For more information on Witherspoon's curricula policies reference John MacLean's *History of the College of New Jersey*, volume one, pp. 300–367.
- <sup>8</sup> Lindsley, 'Samuel Stanhope Smith,' p. 336.
- <sup>9</sup> MacLean, *History*, vol. 1, pp. 14–17.
- <sup>10</sup> Smith to Hobart on 7 Aug 1804. Found in *Archives of the General Convention*, p. 463.
- <sup>11</sup> For more information on Reid's scientific interests reference Paul Wood's 'Thomas Reid and The Tree of Sciences,' *Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, volume 2, September 2004, pp. 119–136.
- <sup>12</sup> William Weeks to Ebenezer Weeks, 11 April 1808, PUL, Manuscript Collection, AM 11456. Found in Douglas Sloan's *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal*, p. 166.
- <sup>13</sup> MacLean, *History of the College of New Jersey*, pp. 33–44.
- <sup>14</sup> Green, Ashbel, 'Address of the Trustees of the College of New Jersey, to the Inhabitants of the United States,' Found in MacLean's *History of the College of New Jersey*, p. 37.
- <sup>15</sup> Smith, *Lectures*, p. 306.
- <sup>16</sup> Monk, p. 106.
- <sup>17</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup> Green, *Life of Ashbel Green*, p. 348.